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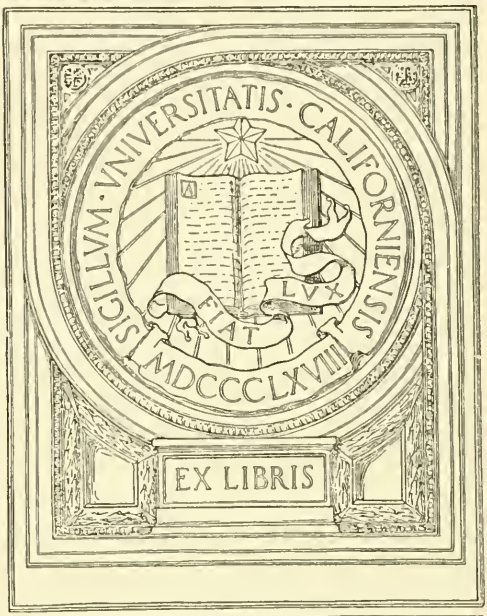

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MIRANDOLA.

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MIRANDOLA

A TRAGEDY

BY

BARRY CORNWALL.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON

JOHN WARREN, OLD BOND STREET.

MDCCCXXI.

LONDON:
SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

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The fact of a father having married the lady betrothed to his son, occurred in the case of Philip the 2nd of Spain, and of D'Este, one of the Dukes of Ferrara. This fact I have borrowed, as well as the circumstance of the father condemning his son to death. In other respects, the Tragedy is, as far as I know, original. The character of the sensitive Mirandola, more particularly, is unborrowed.

AUG 20 1938

That the Tragedy has succeeded so well must be ascribed, no doubt in a material degree, to the great exertion of the performers; and the pleasant task remains to me of saying how much I am sensible of the really masterly delineation which Mr. Macready gave of the

HARDING

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varying and difficult character of Mirandola, and of the high and perfectly admirable portrait which Mr. C. Kemble embodied of the son. Indeed I owe my best thanks to ALL concerned in the representation of the Tragedy, to Mrs. Faucit, Miss Foote (the beautiful representative of Isidora) Mr. Abbott, Mr. Egerton, and Mr. Connor; for *all* were most zealous, and exerted their talents with the greatest possible effect.

I must not let this opportunity pass of saying that I owe much to Mr. Macready, whose kind and valuable suggestions induced me to concentrate the incidents in the latter part of the play more than I had originally intended to do. He will, I hope, be content with this sincere but very inadequate acknowledgement of the friendly interest which he has evinced throughout all the progress of the play.

B. C.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN BY MR. CHAPMAN.

(WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.)

THOUGH, for two hundred years, the stage has been
A varying story, shifting scene by scene
From wit to ribaldry, as veered the age,
'Till both were lost in one wide sea of rage;
Yet, for a time, a crowd of mighty men
Flourished in Britain, their sole arms—the pen,
The Poet's pencil, dipp'd in living light,
That flowed from beaming day or starry night;
Their music such as sprang from winds or floods,
Their colours those which hung the waving woods,
The rocks, the vallies, and the circling sky;
Their spirit the same which has thro' years gone by
Lived—oh! and still, as fair as in its youth,
Survives,—immutable, immortal TRUTH;
Their words—(no heavy coinage of the brain,
Wrought with dull toil and uninspired pain,)
Came from the gently-stricken heart's rebound,
Like natural echoes from some pleasant sound.

Of late some Poets of true mind have writ
Lines that have relished of the ancient wit:
To-night, another, not unknown—yet one
Who feels that much is to be lost—and won,
Comes with a few plain words, honestly told,
Like those his mightier masters spoke of old,
And anxious that his story may by you
Be found to every answering feeling true.—
On no huge sounding words he rests his fame;
No mighty sentences his pride proclaim:
To woo you—win you,—as they did of yore,
In better times, he asks—and asks no more.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

John, Duke of Mirandola . .	Mr. Macready.
Guido, his Son	Mr. C. Kemble.
Hypolito, Son of Isabella . .	Miss Boden.
Casti, Julio, Friends of Guido . .	Mr. Abbot. Mr. Connor.
Gheraldi, a Monk . . .	Mr. Egerton.
Curio	Mr. Comer.
Marco, an Innkeeper	Mr. Atkins.

Pesaro, Andrea, Piero, Nobles, Servants, &c.

Isidora, Duchess of Mirandola .	Miss Foote.
Isabella, Sister of the Duke .	Mrs. Faucit.
Beatrice, Wife of Marco . .	Miss Shaw.

SCENE—At and near Mirandola, in Italy.

MIRANDOLA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The outer yard of an inn on the road to Mirandola.

BEATRICE *enters from the Inn.*

Bea. I thought I heard the trampling of horses. Marco!—There are so few travellers who pass this road, that really we must make the most of all who come. Hark! that was certainly a horse's step.—Marco!—There, again: somebody is certainly coming. *(She listens.)*

MARCO *enters.*

Marco. By Saint Peter, this will be a rare day to go to sleep in. There'll be nothing awake to-day but the sun, and my wife. Why, Beatrice, what's the matter? Are you bent double before your time? She looks like Fine-ear, in the Fairy tale, who listens to hear the grass grow. Beatrice!

Beatrice. Hark! don't you hear?

Marco. Hear? no: and yet—Ha! I do hear some-

thing now. Some travellers, I suppose: yes, they are now almost close to us. They stop. Ah! there they are at the end of the orchard.—Go in, go in and prepare breakfast for them. There never yet was a traveller who had'nt a good appetite. (BEATRICE *goes in.)* A good clever girl that, tho' she talks more than she need at times; but, what!—there's no one perfect. Now if these gallants should be coming to the merry-making at Court, which was held yesterday, in honor of the Duke's marriage that happened some time ago, why they'll be a day too late, that's all.—So, who is this?

ANDREA *enters.*

Andrea. Are you the landlord of this house?

Marco. I am.

Andrea. The Duke's son, Lord Guido, is here on his way home from Naples. Get some refreshment ready, and be quick.

Marco. The Duke's son?

Andrea. Yes.—Why what's the matter? The Duke's son, I said.

Marco. What he who died?

Andrea. Died!—Nonsense! how could he be here if he died? he was only wounded.

Marco. Not dead? that's odd. Is he coming to the Court feast?

Andrea. We've heard of no feast. What is it for? Is any body married, or dead?

Marco. Hush! your master's here.—Beatrice!

GUIDO, CASTI, *and* JULIO *enter.*

Julio. Ah! Signior Casti, you were gallant ever,
At home and in the field.—Here, fellow; shew
Our servants where the horses may be housed.

BEATRICE *enters.*

Marco. I will, my lord.

Casti. Take care of mine,—a grey.

Guido. This is the prettiest girl that I have seen
Since I left Naples.

Bea. Oh! my lord.

Casti. You have forgot poor Bayard.

Guido. No, indeed. Good fellow,
Go with this man, and he will show you where
A berry-brown horse is panting, wet and white
With foam.—Carlo's gone onwards?

Serv. Yes, my lord.

Guido. That horse—he is a friend of mine, (the best
That ever bore a man thro' blood and death;)
Take excellent care of him as you expect
Requital. [MARCO *and* SERVANT *exeunt.*
Thanks, good Casti, many thanks:
Old Bayard too should thank you if he could.

Julio. Now, hostess, we are hungry travellers: go
And strip your larder of it's best: we come
With desperate thoughts against it.

Guido. Pretty hostess!
Are *you* the hostess of this pleasant place?

Beat. Yes, my lord, yes.

Casti. You make her blush.

Julio. No more.—Good hostess, hie thou in and quickly make
The best of preparation: we shall be
With thee anon. [BEATRICE *exit.*

Guido. We shall come to thee soon.

Julio. Why, my dear lord, this peasant seems to take
Your fancy.

Guido. Oh! I like a pretty face
At court or in a cottage.

Casti. And in camp?

Guido. No; there one's thoughts are taught to swerve
From their more natural bent.—I hate the camp.
I hate it's noise and stiff parade,—it's blank
And empty forms, and stately courtesy.
Where between bows and blows, a smile and a stab,
There's scarce a moment. Soldiers always live
In idleness or peril: both are bad.

Casti. I fear that you are right, indeed.

Julio. How! right?

Guido. I am.—
Give me an intellectual nobler life;
Not fighting like the herded elephants, which,
Beckon'd by some fierce slave, go forth to war,
And trample in the dust their fellow brute.
But let *me* live amongst high thoughts and smiles
As beautiful as love; with grasping hands,

And a heart that flutters with diviner life
Whene'er my step is heard.
Julio. Why, what is this?
Casti. A picture of a happier lot, dear friend,
Than you and I have known.
Julio. Had I not seen
You both fight bravely,—better than myself,
I should have doubted you.—What! rail at war—
Bright eyed Bellona?—Oh! for shame, for shame!
I must forswear your company, my Lord.
For me, I like all folks who follow war,
Down to the very suttler: I am even
Friend to the commissary.
Guido. Ay, when you run
In debt.
Casti. With empty pockets.
Guido. Or—or when
He feasts his friends.
Casti. Or falls in love, and wishes
To give a trifle to some girl.
Guido. Indeed, he *is* too much addicted—while I speak,
I grieve to talk thus of him—
Julio. Moral Lord!
Oh! this is well. Go on; and, Signior, you
Who smile but once a week, (then not for joy,)—
*You smile now; yet, you must remember ('tis

* The reader is requested to observe that this mark* designates the com-

Scarce two years since,) at Baiæ, a pale girl,
Who lived so much in private?
Casti. Spare her: nay,
She was unfortunate.
Julio. And you?
Guido. Was kind.
I know the story: touch not on it now.
It is a melancholy tale, fit only
For the fire-side and winter: some dull day,
When the clouds leave a shadow on your brow,
I'll tell it to you.
Casti. Be content; I was
Her friend,—a father, but no more: believe 't.
Julio. Must I? Well, be it:†—but this hostess stays
A long time 'ere she summons us, methinks.
If I eat double 'tis no fault of mine.
I may as well go in,—and——
Guido. But be civil.
Julio. Civil? I'll be as loving.
Casti. Ay, and brief
In your discourse.
Guido. I shall keep watch o'er you.
Julio. And th' hostess?
Guido. Ay; over both wolf and lamb.

[JULIO *exit into the inn.*

mencement, and this† the termination of every passage which is omitted on the representation of the Tragedy.

Casti. I never saw you in so gay a mood:
Have you heard news?
Guido. No;—no.
Casti. I fear I've marred
Your gaiety.
Guido. Ah! no: 'twas but a trick
To cheat away sad folly.—I have heard
Nothing: my courier never, as you know,
Returned: my letters are unanswer'd:—From
My father (yet he was kind once) I might have borne
This fearful silence; but from her—Oh! her
Whom like a star I worshipped.—Pshaw! my eyes
Are like a girl's to-day. I've no doubt
But all is well.
Casti. I hope so.
Guido. Ay; *I* hope.
Why should I fear?—you do not fear? you know
Nothing, good Casti, of my love?
Casti. Nothing: be calm.
Guido. I know not how it is;
But a foreboding presses on my heart
At times, until I sicken.*—I have heard,
And from men learned, that before the touch
(The common, coarser touch) of good or ill,—
That oftentimes a subtler sense informs
Some spirits of the approach of 'things to be.'
Fate comes before it's time; like Hope or Fear
Reverting on the soul, with surer aim.
Casti. What more!†

Guido. Oh! I've a deep dull sense of pain to come
Clinging upon my heart.
Casti. So lovers talk;
And feel, perhaps.* Suspense to them is as
A hideous ghost, changing it's shape for ever.
Thus in wild evenings children's fears, you know,
Shape devils out of shadows.†—Oh! be gay.
Morning will soon be here, and she you sigh for
Will smile these dreams away.
Guido. May it be so!
Let's talk no more of this at present.—Where
Is Julio?
Casti. Likeliest by the cottage fire,
Helping the pretty hostess.
Guido. Let us go.
You think, then, she——
Casti. Oh! I think
Not of her; save that she is fair and true.
Stifle these fears: why, in some three hours hence
You'll see her
Guido. So I shall, indeed.
Casti. Let's drink
Her health in purest water.
Guido. No: in wine.
Casti. In wine then, be it. High Falernian?
Curio. Ay,
In nectar. Why, methinks, these dreams of mine
Are almost banished.
Casti. With yourself remains

The power to do't. Be lord of your own mind.
The dread of evil is the worst of ill;
*A tyrant, yet a rebel, dragging down
The clear-eyed judgment from its spiritual throne,
And leagued with all the base and blacker thoughts
To overwhelm the soul.† But come, our friend
Waits, and—the pretty hostess.
Guido. There: my hand
Is firm as 'tis in battle.
Casti. So it is.
Now then: nay, go you first. I'll follow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Garden of the Duke's Palace.

ISIDORA, ISABELLA, HYPOLITO.

Isab. Cheer thee, dear sister: nay—these mournful looks
Shame all our smiles.
Hyp. Dear aunt!
Isab. Were I the Duke,
I should be jealous of your grief.
Isid. Madam!
Isab. Indeed.—A jealous thing is happiness,—
And delicate too, for round it all must be

Warm like itself and pleasant, else it flies;
Like summer birds from winter.
Isid. Yesterday,—
It's ceremony and toil have worn me down.
Forgive me for it: I am scarcely used
As yet to your court splendors.—I shall be
A Duchess shortly, such as you could wish.
I was not born, you know, to princely pomp,
And it sits ill on me. Hypolito!
Why are *you* sad, dear boy? I thought I was
The only mocker here.
Isab. 'Wake, dreaming child!
Your aunt, the Duchess, speaks to you.
Hyp. Dear Lady. *(Takes* Isidora's *hand.)*
Isab. A pretty gallant: so,—in time he'll break
A promise smoothly.
Isid. I hope not; yet there are
None of his faithless sex who cannot feign.
Isab. Except my brother?
Isid. Ay: except the Duke.
But come, Hypolito; I never hear
Now how your falcon flies, nor of the barb
Your uncle gave you.—How is this? it was
A true Arabian, was it not?
Hyp. Indeed
I scarcely know. I have not rid of late.
Isab. He keeps his chamber, like a languid girl,
And reads romance.—"Indeed, I scarcely know—"

Why that was lisped forth like a girl.—For shame!
What do you know then, sirrah?

Hyp. Oh! I know
By heart, by heart, those gentle stories which
My Aunt (before she *was* my Aunt) gave to me,
And told me with a smile, such as I never
Saw on her face again,—'These lines were strung
'By frenzied Tasso whom a princess scorned,
'And these flew forth from Ariosto's quill,
'And these sad Petrarch, who lamented long
'Laura his love, once writ; and some there were
'Inscribed by great Boccaccio's golden pen,
'Mirthful and mournful, fit for every heart.'

Isab. A pretty list: and is this all you read?
Oh! I must look to you.—The father comes;
In haste, it seems.

GHERALDI *enters.*

Well, father?

Gher. The fair blessing of the day
Rest on you all.—Madam, my duty bends
Before you.

Isid. I am thankful, father, for
Your blessing.

Isab. Thanks, Gheraldi; but you came
In haste, Sir: how was this? Have any news
Reached our so quiet place?

Hyp. I do not like the book you gave me, father.

Isab. Silence!—You do not answer, father. How!

Isid. Come here, Hypolito, come.

[Isidora *and* Hypolito *talk apart.*

Isab. In your look
I read a—something that I would not read.
The Duchess hears us not; you need not drop
Your eyes thus cautiously. Speak freely to me;
What is't?

Gher. Be patient, Madam: you will need
Great store of patience. Guido——

Isab. Ha; speak lower.—Hypolito!

Hyp. Talk kindly to me.

Isab. Well;
Kiss me, and now begone: the father has
Some words for me. Perhaps, dear sister, you——

Isid. I was about to leave you.

Isab. Do not think
I wish that: but some business, such as you
Would think but tedious, calls me hence.

Isid. Farewell! [Isidora *and* Hypolito *exeunt.*

Isab. Father, if I can read your mind, (and now
I ought to read it,) you have news will call
My spirit into action:—Is it so?
Well! I can act. How I can think, you know.
How I will give my cunning force, and weave
The subtle threads of many a project 'round
My victim's brain, thou—thou shalt see.

Gher. I have
Not told my news.

Isab. I see it 'ere you speak.
It is of Guido: he has then discovered?—
Gher. Not so.
Isab. Then all is well.
Gher. Why, still not so.
He has not yet discovered—
Isab. Father, speak.
Am I to guess and guess and still mistake,
While you, with all the tidings on your tongue,
Keep all from me! What you know, boldly speak.
Gher. Lord Guido, then, is well: that is some news;
For when we last heard of him, he lay sick
Upon his bed at Naples.
Isab. Yes,—go on.
Gher. He knows not of his father's marriage yet:
But being impatient at the silence which
His Isidora, and his father kept,
He left the South (forgetting smaller ills)
And comes straight to Mirandola!
Isab. Indeed!
He must be stopped.
Gher. He should have been, had I
Known of his coming; but he is here already.
Isab. What! not arrived?
Ghér. In two hours hence he'll stand
Before his father.
Isab. Has the Duke yet learned
His coming.

Gher. No: I've kept the secret; but
It must be known, and quickly.
Isab. And those letters—
Those letters of the Duke; they never reached
Guido at Naples—of this you are sure!
Gher. Never; nor those he wrote unto the Duke,
Except that one first telling that he lived;
(Dead Gaspero was an honest knave to us—)
I hold them safe: for in them lies my life.
Isab. Why then go bravely to the Duke;
And tell him Guido comes: tell him, at once,
That all the bright tears Isidora shed,
Dropped for his son.
Gher. Ha! but *I* cautioned her
(Because the Duke was jealous) when she heard
That he still lived and loved her, to conceal
The name of Guido.—How shall this be answered?
Isab. Who can betray? Why did she marry him?
Gher. Nay,—'twas her mother's want—
Isab. Well, well: now go
Unto the Duke (I know his humour well)
And tell this. Of his marriage you can say——
Gher. What?
Isab. You can hint that haply Guido may
Clothe him in ignorance,—perhaps pretend
He wrote to say he lived, and so forth: ha?
Tell him of Guido's friendship for those men—
Those men who did rebel: and you can shew

How good a casuist you are, father, when
A doubt springs up; and you can pour a balm
(You have both sting and honey, like the bee,)
If there be need, and—pshaw! I school my master.
Gher. You flatter, gracious lady: you are still
A keen displomatist: you surely cannot
Need my poor service.
Isab. What is this?—Gheraldi!
What is it you ask?
Gher. Nothing: no, tho' you said——
Isab. I say so still: my interest at Rome
Is great as ever. You shall have, be sure,
The Cardinal's hat, when old Galotti dies.
Gher. Have I your word for this?
Isab. Sir, be content;
I give my honourable word.
Gher. Enough.
Isab. And now farewell. Be careful, Sir;
Ay, and successful, and the conclave shall
Have its most subtle spirit to boast of yet. [*Exit.*
Gher. Dear lady, fare you well.—Now for the Duke.
He is as shifting as the April wind:
And how to break this news I know not. Guido
By this has got my letter, and knows that
His love is here; no more. And now—and now,
Shall I go on? Pshaw! rather shall I doubt?
Do I not see those earthly gods mine own,
Power, wealth, high reputation, (holy cheat!)

Like dazzling sun-beams on my stricken eye
They blind, yet lead me onwards. I shall be
A Cardinal: Aye, Pope perhaps. What more
Need I to teach me wisdom? Now for the Duke. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Duke's private chamber.

DUKE *and* ISIDORA *discovered—the* DUKE *writing.*

CURIO *waiting.*

Duke. Here; send this pacquet, my good Curio,
Unto our brother Mantua: this dispatch
Unto Modena. You have nothing else
To speak of?
Curio. Nothing, gracious Sir.
Duke. Farewell.
Yet stay, if—no, 'twas nothing: fare you well.
[CURIO *exit.*
Forgive me that I thus neglect you, love.
—Why, my dear Isidora, yesterday
Has worn you to a shadow.
Isid. Oh! not so.
Duke. In faith it has.—Dear girl, I know you hate
These empty pageantries. Jove! so do I.
I'd rather be in battle, and weighed down

By steel and iron than by these idle gauds.
But we must play our part, my sweet one, in
This silly world. Could I order things here,
Half of the moon I'd waste in war: the rest
I'd give to Cupid.

Isid. So: not all to love then?

Duke. Why, no—yet I am wrong; for Oh! with you
Who could desert the chamber for the camp?
Not I. I would be with you ever—ever.

Isid. That were too long.

Duke. Too long, my Isidora?

Isid. Ay: 'Ever' is a long time, my dear lord:
Love has no such eternity.

Duke. Indeed!

Isid. Indeed, 'tis so. Life even has its end;
And love cannot be longer sure than life.

Duke. It is: or else 'tis nothing.—Did I think
That in the narrow limit of this world
Sweet love were bound—*Did *I* fear that beyond
These earthy barriers (which our winged thoughts
Still strive to over-fly, and still in vain,)
Love were no resident,† I would—but you—
You are a traitor to the rose crown'd God:
I'll kiss you in revenge.

Isid. You should not punish
One who is ignorant only.

Duke. Punish! How!

Will that be punishment? I said that I
Would kiss you, love.

Isid. I know it—in revenge.

Duke. True; in revenge. Revenge is bitter sweet:
And in its rich completion lies as well
Gall as oblivious balm: a paradox
Of passion is revenge. 'Tween you and me,
Fair Isidora, let it never live.

Isid. I hope not, Sir.

Duke. It shall not. Mark! I speak
More boldly here than you. I know my heart:
And your's too can I read.

Isid. What! read my heart?

Duke. I spoke in jest: you tremble: I am calm
(You see't) as conscious love—or fate—or death.

Isid. I'm often thus: pray take no heed of it.
You trembled too, I thought.

Duke. Feel that I do not. [*Puts out his hand.*

Isid. I did not note your hand, but thro' your voice
There ran a tremulous chord which made me—think.

Duke. Of what?

Isid. That you were angry: nothing more.

Duke. Oh! then you far mistake me. I am not
A leaf blown to and fro' by every breath:
I am as stedfast as the oak;—ay, more,
*As little to be shook or turned aside
From my vowed purpose as the based rock,
Which when the blasts of thundering winter tear

The pines away from their strong rifted holds,
Looks calmly as tho' 'twere sun-shine still,—and smiles.†
Isid. I am glad you are so calm.
Duke. Why are you glad—why glad
My Isidora? You can ne'er have cause
To dread my anger?
Isid. Oh! I hope not.
Duke. You
Could never dread me, Isidora?
Isid. Never.
For never could I do you wrong, my lord.
Duke. My own sweet love! Oh! my dear peerless wife!
By the blue sky and all its crowding stars
I love you better—Oh! far better than
Woman was ever loved. There's not an hour
Of day or dreaming night but I am with thee:
There's not a wind but whispers of thy name,
And not a flower that sleeps beneath the moon
But in its hues or fragrance tells a tale
Of thee, my love, to thy Mirandola.
Speak, dearest Isidora, can you love
As I do? Can—but no, no; I shall grow
Foolish if thus I talk. You must be gone
You must be gone, fair Isidora, else
The business of the Dukedom soon will cease.
I speak the truth, by Dian. Even now
Gheraldi waits without (or should) to see me

In faith, you must go: one kiss, and so, away.

Isid. Farewell, my lord.

Duke. We'll ride together, dearest,
Some few hours hence.

Isid. Just as you please; farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell! With what a waving air she goes
Along the corridor. How like a fawn;
Yet statelier.—Hark! no sound however soft
(Nor gentlest echo) telleth when she treads;
But every motion of her shape doth seem
Hallowed by silence. Thus did Hebe grow
Amidst the Gods, a paragon; and thus—
Away! I'm grown the very fool of love.

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. The father—

Duke. Bid him come. [CURIO *exit.*

I never saw
My beauty look so well: *the summer light
Becomes her, tho' she shames it, being so fair.
Methinks I've cast full twenty years aside,
And am again a boy. Every breath
Of air that trembles thro' the window bears
Unusual odour.†

GHERALDI *enters.*

Welcome, father, welcome:
If you have any good to ask, be quick,
For I am bountiful to-day. The tide
Of my free humour cannot last—nor ought,

Else should I soon be beggar'd. What's i' the air?—
Some subtle spirit runs thro' all my veins.
Hope seems to ride this morning on the wind,
And joy outshines the sun. Why, what is this?

Gher. My gracious lord!

Duke. Speak out. Your tone is cold
As the ringing sound a footstep strikes from out
The frosted earth. I am like spring, rejoicing.
Father, I hate these mournful moods: I hate 'em.
Be joyful, Sir, or look so.

Gher. My dear lord,
I have some news, which while this spirit lasts,
I almost fear to tell. 'Twill strike cold on
Your mind, my lord; but—but it must be told.
Your son, my lord,——

Duke. How! well; go on.

Gher. Lord Guido will be here, my lord, within
An hour.

Duke. Again, Sir,—speak again.

Gher. Your son,
Lord Guido will be here within this hour.

Duke. I'm glad to hear it.
He uses little ceremony: well!
How learned you this?

Gher. His courier has arrived,
Who left him scarce two hours ago: he then
Was coming hither strait.

Duke. Has he not written?

Gher. He has not; but—(and this indeed seems strange,)
His servant says—tho' this must be surmise—
That his young master still is ignorant of
Your highness' marriage.
Duke. That's impossible!
I wrote to him twice—more.
Gher. Yes, Sir; but——
Duke. But what?
Speak!
Gher. Did your highness ever hear the name
O' the friend the Duchess mourned so?
Duke. Never: she
Wished not to tell it; so, altho' my mind
Dislikes such secrets, I have never asked.
Gher. Lord Guido then never confided his—
Attachment to you?
Duke. His—his? Never.
Gher. Never?
Duke. Never. I feel a faintness o'er me. Never.
Did he—did he—
Gher. Another time, my lord,
Let's speak of this. As to your son's return——
Duke. Monk! I must have your answer.
Gher. Well: I have heard
My lord, that he——
Duke. I listen: go on.

Gher. That he
Once loved the Duchess.
Duke. How! great Heaven! am I
Awake?
Gher. I would not have disclosed this tale
To your Highness, but——
Duke. Be silent. Can it be
That he (I know not what I say) has been
Deceived?
Gher. Your Highness wrote to him before
Your marriage?—No.
Duke. No; not befor't: we thought
That he was dead; yet when the news (glad news
I thought it,) came that still he lived, I sent
Direct to Naples.
Gher True; by Gaspero.
Duke. But wherefore,—nay, how was 't you dared
conceal
From me that he had loved her? Speak to that
Gher. I thought it a boyish fancy, soon to change.
Yet that he loved her once, (madly) I can
Avouch.
Duke. He is not apt to change.
Gher. Why that—
When first I knew he had not written home,
Struck on my mind. I own it.
Duke. [*aside.*]—Upon mine
It falls as cold as winter. You should not
Have kept it from me. 'Twas a fault.

Gher. Nay, Sir,—

Duke. O Heaven! had I but known for whom those tears
Were shed:—but *still* she weeps: Ah! wherefore still?
He is alive.

Gher. My lord!

Duke. Perhaps he comes
Here to reproach or make a shew of grief:
Perhaps—Did you not speak?

Gher. Yes, Sir; your son——

Duke. Did I not watch him thro' his headstrong youth,
This fault forgiving and forgetting that—
His friendship with that false Vitelli, whom
I hate as I hate shame—his strange request
For those three rebels (that was never cleared)
Marni, Saletto, Rossi? you know this.

Gher. If I might but advise—

Duke. Be dumb, Sir. I
Can be my own good counsel. Did I not
Write, and so kindly too? *Did—did he come
Quite straight from Naples?

Gher. Yes, my lord; I hear
He only staid at Count Vitelli's house;
And there not long.

Duke. At Count Vitelli's? He
Can never pass that traitor's den. What spell
Doth drag him there?

Gher. None that I know of, Sir,
But,† may I now advise? If aught be wrong

Touching Vitelli's friendship with your son.
(Tho' I hope nothing *is* wrong) or—or if
He loves the lady Isidora still,————

Duke. Death! thou false monk!—Sir, if your tongue but utter
A word of that—What! love her? love!

Gher. I meant————

Duke. You said he loved.

Gher. Did I? pray pardon me.
This news has ruffled me, my lord. I beg
That you'll forget. My mouth is filled to-day
With errors.

Duke. Yet should he *indeed* love her?

Gher. If then, my lord, your son should but pretend
To love, and urge you to injustice————

Duke. Ha!
That's well—well thought of. Oh! there's many a knave
About me (that I feel) too ready still
To second old Vitelli's bloody hand.
Can he be foe to me? I will not think it.
Yet I'll be calm, and wary.

Gher. Some one comes.

[Carlo *enters.*

Carlo. Your Highness!

Duke. Speak!

Carlo. Lord Guido will be here
Almost————

Duke. Go to him, good Gheraldi. Leave us.

[Carlo *exit.*

Receive him, father, and before he comes
To me, inform him (mark if honestly
He take the news,) that I am married.—When
You have told this, say that I wish his presence:
Yet, first announce him; so I may learn how far
His soul is bent to cunning.

Gher. I am gone.

Duke. Take good note, Sir.

Gher. I will.

Duke. Be sure you do! [*Exeunt separately.*

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Court-yard before the Palace.

GHERALDI.

Gher. He must not see the Duchess yet. These scenes
Of tears and quarrel but ill suit a court;
And the Duke loves decorum.—Now have I
Been confidant to father, and to son,—
To her (by virtue of my calling)—*her*,
And the proud Isabella. Had I not
A cowl, I fear a blush at times might tell
A story. Guido knows his love is here;
(Thus much I've written to him,) but that she
Is Duchess here, he knows not: so,—he comes.

Guido. [*without.*] Ha! ha!—well, as you please: I shall expect you.

GUIDO *enters, and is passing over in haste.*

Gher. My lord! lord Guido!

Guido. Ha! Gheraldi, you?
Where's Isidora? Is my father well?

Gher. Your father bids——

Guido. I'll see him presently:
But where's my love?

Gher. He has commanded me——

Guido. Not now, not now.
Where is she?

Gher. First, hear the Duke's message; nay.

Guido. Now by my soul, I shall be angry with you.
Say to your lord some ten,—five minutes hence,
I'll seek him in his study. You oppress me.
What do you mean that thus you shake your head
In silence—or is 't sorrow?—Ha! she's dead?

Gher. Not so, my lord.

Guido. Why all is well then;—yet,
(What do you mean?) you seem to mock my joy,
And lay a leaden hand upon the wings
Of all my hopes.—Oh! Isidora, where,
Where are *you* loitering now when Guido's here?
By the bright god of love, I'll punish you,
Idler, and press your rich red lips until
The colour flies.

Gher. My lord: nay, do not frown.
I have a story of deep interest, Sir.
It is my duty (my sad duty now,)
To break unto your ear some tidings.

Guido. Quick!

Gher. Your father, my dear lord, is married.

Guido. So.——

Gher. Reasons of state—

Guido. Keep 'em, good Monk, I have no stomach now
For any food but love.

Gher. Strong reasons did induce my lord ('twas when
You were reported dead) to seek a bride.
He left the common course that monarchs use,
And chose from out the land he govern'd, one
Who might have shamed the world.

Guido. That was not well,
At least.

Gher. I mean she was so fair, my lord.

Guido. I mark you. Well?

Gher. My lord your father (urged
By some state policy, and fearful lest
Your death should snap the link your friendship formed
'Tween him, and Count Navarro,)—

Guido. Chose his daughter?

Gher. No; not—not thus.

Guido. How then? Speak! Is my heart
Bursting? What is 't I fear? My very soul
Is sick, and full of some dismay, as tho'
Fate were upon me. If—I dare not ask:
I dare not, tho' a word would end it all.
Gheraldi! no, no, no: silence awhile:
I will not hear thee now. Oh! heaven and earth!
If it were so—it cannot be: it shall not.
Yet if it were——Oh! Isidora, you,
What *you*—She is as constant as the stars

That never vary, and more chaste than they.
Forgive, forgive me that I slander thee
Even in dreams. Gheraldi, now I'll listen,
And you shall tell your tale. I was a fool
Just now. Forgive me, father:—now.

Gher. I said your father did desire a bride
From out his realm. Navarro's daughter then
Was woo'd; now she is married: but he had
Two nieces.

Guido. Ay, I see't. My father saw
The lady Julia: yes, I see how 'twas;
It was so, was it not?

Gher. He saw her there.

Guido. Ay, ay: she was a pretty girl when last
I was at home: and so he married her?

Gher. He saw them both, Sir, with a favouring eye.
The lady Isidora then in tears——

Guido. True; they might not become her: yet she's fair.
When joy is in her eye 'tis like the light
Of Heaven: blue, deep and ethereal blue.
I would not wish a life more beautiful;
And, were she but a Saint, I'd worship her.
Sad Isidora! Did thine eyes indeed
Shower diamond drops for me? My gentle love!
*But Guido (thine) is come at last to kiss
The tears away for ever. Happiness
Looks out to find thee; shall it look in vain!

Gher. May I proceed, my lord?

Guido. I had forgot.
Where were we?
Gher. I was telling that† your father
Saw Count Navarro's nieces, and preferr'd
The elder.
Guido. You—you said he *married Julia.*
Gher. No, my lord: no.
Guido. Whom then? it cannot be.
Gher. My lord! I——
Guido. Monk! speak out: Curse on my trembling.
One word—a single word. Now :—tho' your breath
Carry damnation (as I think it does)
To every hope of mine, be quick, quick.—Now.
Stun me with sorrow, lest I feel too much,
And slay thee. What's her name—my father's bride?
Gher. 'Tis Isidora.
Guido. Thou has done't.
Gher. My lord!
Look up, my Lord! So—there: you're very pale.
Nay, for your father's sake.
Guido. Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Gher. Lord Guido! I—Gheraldi—speak to you.
Oh! well: I see you know me now Not so.
Nay, look more cheerfully.—You're better now?
Guido. Thou—thou knew'st all my love. Thou busy
priest—
Gher. My lord.

Guido. Thou pander to my father's wish,
(He is no father, I disown him.) Thou—
Thou busy meddling Monk.
Gher. My lord, my lord,
This is not well!
Guido. Away! my mother? Oh! *my* mother was
As pure as purity. I will not talk
Of her who *is*—yet oh! what pity 'tis
That one so fair should now be full of blots,
And that a face which love had breathed upon
Should now be scarred all over. Once, I thought
That in her eyes, (how beautiful they were!)
Her soul shone out.
Gher. If you will let me speak—
Guido. But she is grown a harlot in my sight.
What! married to my father, to *my* father!
What! smile upon the son, and wed the sire,
Because—there's some strange cause. What blinding spell
Is there now hung between us and the Moon,
That dims the sights of women? There's a cause:
I dare not guess: I will not.
Gher. May I speak?
Guido. Father Gheraldi, you have done your errand.
Tell the Duke of Mirandola, his Son
Is now at ease.—Say that the news at first
Was somewhat stirring: but that he—ay, he
Forgives—forgets; no, never, never can

That soon forgot that all his life was blighted.
Say what you will, Sir.

Gher. But your father, now,
Expects you.

Guido. I'm too gallant, Sir; so tell him.
I'll pay my duty to the Duchess first;
Unto my—mother, since it must be so:
And when we have discuss'd some words, why then
I'll meet him. No more words, Sir.—Now, farewell!

[*Exeunt at different sides.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in the Palace.

Enter ISABELLA, *meeting* CASTI *and* JULIO.

Isab. Welcome unto Mirandola.

Casti. Many thanks.

Isab. Ah! Signior Julio! give you welcome, Sir.

Julio. *I thank you, Madam, thank you heartily.
A little leisure is welcome even to me.

Isab. You have not lost your spirits in the wars?

Julio. No Madam, much the same; I'm still, at least,
Your servant ever.

Isab. Oh! Sir,† we shall try
Your gallantry to-day: the Duke hath ordered

A feast in honour of his son.—Count Casti,
You've seen my brother?

Casti. Madam?

Isab. You are wrapt
In study, Sir: some fosse, or counterscarp,
Or siege, or ambuscade then filled your brain.

Casti. No, Madam, none.

Isab. Brief answer.—Have you seen
My brother yet?

Casti. I have not.

Isab. He will be
Rejoiced to see you. Ah!—yes, it is he.

Julio. Faith, 'tis the Duke: he looks more young than ever.

Casti. Now, to my mind, his eye is filled with care.

DUKE *enters.*

Duke. Ha! gentlemen, and friends, I'm glad to see
Such faces at Mirandola.

Casti. My lord,
We are your son's companions.

Duke. So I hear:
Therefore, ye are more welcome, Signior, [*To* JULIO.] I
Have heard of your good acts. Your sword is dulled
With carnage, I am told. Fair faces here
Have smiled, and gentle hearts have wished you well.

Julio. My Lord!

Duke. Indeed I hear 'twas so.

Isab. 'Tis true.

Duke. Signior, your deeds have filled the mouth of fame,
And you too have admirers ; none more true
Than I. [*Takes* CASTI's *hand.*
Casti. My lord, you do me honour.
Duke. Sir,
I do myself much honour thus to take
A good man by the hand. You are not all
Soldier, and yet enough : I do not love
All courtier : I myself, you know, was once
Something (not much) o' the soldier.
Julio. Oh !—
Casti. My lord,
You have fought bravely ; that the world well knows.
Julio. Your foes especially, my lord.
Duke. Oh ! no.
I drew the sword for pastime : you for right.
Shall I not see my son ?
Isab. He will be here
Speedily.
Julio. If I am right, I saw him talk
Just now with the confessor, old Gheraldi.
I'll bid him come to you.
Duke. Not so : stay, Sir.
I'll wait for my son's leisure. He is tired
Perhaps, and his too sensitive nature asks
Some quiet 'ere he sees me.—You have been
With him throughout the war, Sir, have you not ?

Casti. I have, my lord.

Duke. I mean, attached to the same
Battalion?

Casti. 'Twas so.

Duke. Was he sad, or gay?

Casti. He has a natural gaiety that sits
Pleasantly on him, when no ill 's at hand:
But he is soon depressed and latterly————

Duke. Well latterly—you stop?

[ISABELLA *draws* JULIO *aside.*

Casti. Of late,
He has been ill, (wounded you know,) and grief—
Some secret sorrow wearing down his heart,
Has paled his cheek, and thinned it: and at times,
I've seen him fretted much beyond his custom.

Duke. Indeed! then must it be
The sun, (there is no cause beside,)—the Sun
Hath burnt these humours on him, and perhaps
Quickened the wholesome current of his blood,
'Till it outruns it's channels: *then, you know,
Come fevers, and in the abused brain
Distraction; so, before the sight diseased
Shadows will stalk, and ghosts of unreal ills:
Filling the bloated fancy 'till it bursts:
These things I know.†—But Guido——?

Casti. Oh! he will
Grow fresh again, now that his father's arms
Are open.

Julio. And his love's.

Duke. True, Signior,—as you say,
I see Gheraldi——True; my arms are open.
Excuse me, Signior Casti; I shall soon
See you again. Once more I bid you welcome.
You will not fail my banquet.

Casti. We are much
Honored, my lord.

Julio. My lord, we————

Isab. Come, Signior, you'll go with us;
I have some things to say.

Duke. Why doth the Friar loiter? Sirs, farewell!

Julio. We take our leave, my lord.

[*Exeunt* Isabella, Julio, *and* Casti.

Duke. He motions and retires.—Well, for the present
I must shake hands with patience, and be still.
*The day is lowering. What a beaming morn
It was; (ay, so was mine,) and now the clouds
Hang round about like some fierce accident
Which comes upon us as we think to reach
Safely our home.†—Now, should this boy have been
Cheated—it cannot be; old Gaspero
When he returned to die, gave fair account
Of the delivery of my letters.—When
I see him I will look into his soul:
And yet whene'er I see him
(True son of dead Bianca,) her pale smile
And scornful eye shoot thro' my very heart.

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I would that I could think he meant me fair;
Why should I think him guilty—is he not
My son? Ah! did I mean his Mother fair?
And yet my will has made him now my heir?
Passing my Sister's son.—Can he still love her?
Ha! the Monk passes. So, now for the news. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment of the Duchess.

ISIDORA *enters.*

Isid. He comes, he comes; and I must see him, too.
Oh! that I must.—Not yet.—I must, I *must.*
Hark! no, it is not he: It is my heart.
Will it not burst? My throat is full and choaking.
God! look upon me now, and save me!—Save!
He'll come and curse me—and it will be good;
For I have stolen his heart away, and flung
Mine own to ruin.—Ruin! Oh! that I
Could tell him all about my cruel lot,
And how I was betrayed, and lost for ever.
That Monk advised me—Oh! no more of that.
Ha! some one comes.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. [*after a pause.*] Madam, I come to pay
My duty to you.

Isid. Welcome; you are welcome.

Guido. I come to see how well her bridal dress
Becomes the Duchess of Mirandola.

Isid. You have been well, I hope?

Guido. Since when?

Isid. Since you—
You and I parted.

Guido. That's a long time, now.
I have forgot: how is 't that *you* remember?

Isid. I—I—Oh! pity me.

Guido. Weep, lady, weep.
Tears (yet they're bitter) purify the soul,
But your's is fair?—I know they ease the heart.
Mother!

Isid. Oh! Guido,—cruel, cruel, cruel!

Guido. [*aside.*] By Heaven, my courage begins to fail; and I
Grow womanish. Now let me wring her heart,
As she wrung mine.—Ah! there she weeps away
Almost to dissolution. How she bends,
Like one who sickens with remorse or love;
And she, perhaps, has been betrayed.—Alas!
Poor Isidora!

Isid. Ah!—you spoke?—you spoke?

Guido. 'Twas nothing.

Isid. Nothing? It was all to me.
'Twas happiness—no, that is gone: 'twas Hope:
'Twas pardon. Oh! my lord, (Guido no more,)

What have I done that you *can* use me thus?
I would not for the world, for all the world,
Put you to such great sorrow.

Guido. Shall I tell you?

Isid. Yes.

Guido. Listen to me, then. When you were young—
You are young still, and fair; the more's the pity:
But in the time I speak of, you were just
Bursting from childhood—with a face as fair
As tho' you had look'd in Paradise, and caught
It's early beauty: then, your smile was soft,
As Innocence before it learns to love.
And yet a woman's passion dwelt within
Your heart, as warm as Love.—But I am wrong?

Isid. Oh! no. I loved—

Guido. Indeed?

Isid. Indeed, indeed.

Guido. Well!—There was one who loved you too.
He said
That every hope he had rested on you.
He worshipped you, as Idols are adored
In countries near the sun. He gave his heart
So absolutely up, that had he thought
Then, that you would desert him, he'd have slain
Himself before you. You were his home, his heaven,
His wealth, his light, his mind, and life substantial.
But then he went away to the fierce wars,
(His honor was pledged for it,) and he left

You with an oath upon your soul behind.
'Twas said he died—

Isid. One said he saw you fall.

Guido. 'Twas said he died, and that she grieved awhile,
In virgin widowhood for him. At last,
A Duke—a reigning Duke, with wintry hair,
And subtle spirit, and— without a heart,
Came wooing to her, and so—you do not heed me—
And so she dried her tears, and (tho' the youth
Wrote that he lived,) she laugh'd, and left the son,
To marry with the father.

Isid. And you wrote
To me?

Guido. To you, and him.

Isid. I feared 'twas so.
*Now Heaven help me; for I'm wound about
By their strong toils, and there is no escaping.
Oh! I am worn, and broken down by grief.†
I dare not hope that you'll believe me, yet
That letter, Guido—Oh, I never knew it;
I had no letter—saw no letter.

Guido. What!
I wrote to you from Naples: from my bed
Where I lay languishing, by Gaspero,
My father's servant. Why, I wrote—(has there
Been cozening here!)—unto my father: *he*
Will not deny 't. Where is that slave?

Isid. Gaspero? He is dead.

Guido. He was my father's servant. Could he be
Unfaithful? No.

Isid. Your father prized him much.
Oh! it is too clear: we are both undone.

Guido. It may be;—nay, it is. But, 'ere I sink,
I will be righted some way, or revenged.
What! does he think to cheat me now, and wear
His prize abroad so boldly.—before *me?*
I'll have revenge.

Isid. He is your father, Guido.
Nay—

Guido. I disown him. He has lost his son.
Some parents shut their children from their homes,
(Young boys and gentle girls) but *I* abjure
My father in his age: let him go down
Into his grave alone.

Isid. Do not incense him.

Guido. Whom?

Isid. The Duke.

Guido. You're right.
Call him no more my father. No; I'll talk
As one man with his equal; or, perhaps,
I may wear something of superior scorn,
And drop a word or two of charity;
But that will be for thy sake, my poor girl!
Nay, dry your tears: and let us part awhile.

Isid. Farewell.

Guido. Oh! not farewell yet. I but go
To see the Duke. When shall we meet again?

Isid. We must not; yet—

Guido. We will, we will, once more.

Isid. Hark !—hush ! your father comes.

Guido. Why, that is well.

We will (I'm glad of't) say at once good morrow,
Without more ceremony.

Isid. No; not now,

Not now, I cannot bear it.—Nay, for me.

Guido. That is a charm I cannot disobey.

Isid. Quick, quick, he comes!

Guido. We'll meet again. Remember ! [Isid. *exit.*

Curio *enters.*

Well, Sir?

Curio. My lord; his highness waits for you.

Guido. Where is he?

Curio. In his private chamber, Sir.

Guido. Tell him, I come. [Curio *exit.*

Now, thou false Fortune, am I still thy fool?
Shall I see him, and, like a cheated child,
Believe each word he utters?—He was kind
Once, amidst all his pride, to me: but now
He has (has he not?)—robbed me—stolen away
The gem I love beyond the whole vast world,
And with a selfish vanity, here, before
My very eyes, he wears it to my shame—
His shame, and my deep sorrow. Now, my heart,
I have known thee firm in danger, droop not now!
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

(*The* DUKE *pacing up and down his room—at last he stops.*)

Duke. Hark! He stays long—but Isidora is
Prudent, I think,—I hope. His blood is quick,
But I will not doubt. Why should he loiter at
Vitelli's house,—that traitor's?—He stays long,
—A month ago and I was happy! No;
Not happy, yet encircled by deep joy,
Which tho' 'twas all around, I could not touch.
But it was ever thus with Happiness:
It is the gay to-morrow of the mind
That never comes.—Hark! no! 'twas but a door
That shut. And is my soul in such dismay,
That every petty whisper of the wind
Can scare me? Once—but that is passed, and now
Each sound is laden and each shadow filled
With fears: like exhalations in the dusk

They rise before me, wheresoe'er I tread.
Who's there?

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. Lord Guido
Is now without, my lord.
Duke. Bid him come in. [CURIO *exit.*
There is a strange confusion in my mind:
Perhaps my son, like a fair morning light,
May dispel all. He is here:—how pale he looks.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. I am come, my lord.
Duke. I,—I rejoice to see you. I am proud
To know my son has won so good a name.
Your honours will shame mine. Well, well, so be it.
On you has fallen now the task to lift
The fair and great name of Mirandola.
You have been absent long: too long.
Guido. My lord!
Duke. I am your father, Guido,
Guido. Oh! much more:
You are the Prince.
Duke. But still your father: nay—
Guido. My lord, there are some things which, little used,
Soon rust: such is respect. The name of Prince
Brings to the memory of many men
What they might else forget.

Duke. There is no cause
For this between us.
Guido. Pardon me: for once
Give me my humour.
Duke. As you please,—for once.
Come let us sit. What cause have you for this?
Guido. Cause! but—but let it pass.
Duke. Dear Guido.
Guido. Sir!
Duke. I do not understand—
Guido. And yet it is
As plain as day—as the full risen day.
But let us sit: with all my heart. [DUKE *sits.*
Duke. I am
Distressed, my son, to hear—
Guido. Ha! have you heard?
Duke. I hear the words you speak.
Guido. But understand not.
Was it not so, my lord? You hear—
Duke. I hear,
And see, and feel that now my only son,
And the first subject of my Dukedom, dares
To spurn his Prince,—his father; putting off
The garb of love, and—
Guido. Right: it is a cloak;
Under whose folds, fathers as well as sons,
Do things to shame the stars.
Duke. Guido, by Heaven!—

But this—this is not well, my son, no more of it.
I sent for you by the Confessor—
Guido. Ay,
That you may in my ear unload your mind
Of some dark secret; what is 't? Speak, my Lord.
If you have done aught that may leave a blot
On the bright annals of our house, confess,
And I will be as secret as deceit.
If you have been a tyrant, *and enslaved
The bodies or the minds of noble men,
Why, let me know it: or, if you have been
As poisonous as the serpent, or have mined,
Mole-like, your way beneath your neighbour's house,
And shook down all his happiness, confess it:
Or if, like the wilderness creature, you have prey'd
Even upon your young, I bid you still
To tell me and take comfort.†
Duke. I have been
Silent, my son—
Guido. Not so, not so; and yet you were in truth:
When slander came abroad, and I was absent,
You kept a politic silence; thus I've heard:
And, when I fell, you wept and kissed away
The bright warm tears from Isidora's cheek.
But I rose up again:—I rose, my lord,
Up from my bed of battle, and while the blood
Harden'd upon my wounds, I traced, with weak
And shaking fingers, a poor scrawl, reminding

Her of our love: you start? our love I said;
And you—you kept it from her. Speak? was 't so?
There's no one to betray you: should you blush,
I'll hush your virtue, like a murder, up.

Duke. Guido, you go too far: no more of this.

Guido. No more?

Duke. You'll anger me—I tell you this
For the last time. My blood is hot as your's.

Guido. Much hotter. Noble lord, if I may speak—

Duke. You may not, Sir. Death! shall I stand and suffer
These insolent taunts from you, my son, my slave,
My—

Guido. Slave!

Duke. Ay, Sir, whate'er may suit my humour.

Guido. Your highness's humour 'changes, that I know.

Duke. Sir, tho' it shift as often as the wind,
'Tis not for you to mark it. 'Tis my humour,
My spleen, my will.

CURIO *enters.*

Curio. Did my lord call?

Duke. Begone.
If then another word—I said, begone. [CURIO *exit.*
But no, no, no: no more of this: no more.

Guido. Then, you deny——?

Duke. Ah! Guido, this will bring

Bitter repentance, in some after day;
Till then be silent—still.
Guido. Oh! I will be
As silent as the grave you've dug for me.
*I'll be as wary as the fox, and subtle,
But like the adder, when I'm questioned, deaf.
And should you fall, (Princes may fall, my lord,
As the red leaves in autumn,—nay in spring;)
If your own tyranny, or others hate,
Rebels at home, or cozening friends abroad,
Or open foes should cast you down at last,—
Fear not; I will be there; close at your heart,
Just like the canker when the tree decays.†
Duke. When you have ended,——
Guido. I have said,—have done.
Duke. You have; and had I not
Some of that kindly blood, which you deny,
You must have spoken less. Guido, you
Have done me shameful wrong; but I have been
Patient,—as patient as my nature might:
I have born words; such words as never prince
Yet bore before from subject, or from son.
Guido. Perhaps,—
Duke. Speak out.
Guido. Perhaps, I have been warm;
But, no,—no.
Duke. As you please. Your humour turns
Quickly as mine, it seems; but it shall be
My humour to forget. If, after this,

In your distemper'd judgment—but no more.
—Your mother—

Guido. Ah! indeed no more, no more.

Duke. The Duchess of Mirandola expects
To see you. Come, I will go with you,—now.

Guido. I—I have seen her.

Duke. So: 'twas well.

Guido. I bade
Gheraldi tells you that I had gone thither.

Duke. 'Tis true; he told me (I remember now,)
That you had gone to pay your duty there.
She was rejoiced to see you?

Guido. No; not much.

Duke. How? not rejoiced? it was not well to meet
My son, and not rejoice; but you must pardon.
She has been ill, and the full summer moon
Sways at will women's fancies.

Guido. You are gay.

Duke. Why not? I have my wife here, and my son
The one is beautiful, the other brave.
I have no curse that clings to me: no fear
That enemies or *friends can do me harm.
There's not a traitor in the realm could live
Now undetected.

Guido. Traitors! there are none.

Duke. Oh! be not sure. When first the snake puts on
His summer-skin, he looks not loathsome: 'tis

When he's contract and wrinkled, we begin
To fear or hate him.†—But these things are not
Fit for a day like this. We should be gay.

Guido. I'll do my best.

Duke. Who can ask more? Come then;
*We'll speak no more of the serpent; yet it was
The circling emblem of eternity,
And in its terrible folds this world and all
Its host of strange and proud inhabitants,
With proud men at the head, was compass'd once.
If 'twere so now, it would be well, methinks,
If the lithe thing would draw its sinuous shape
Closer and closer, till—but I forget
The festival.

Guido. You do in truth, my lord:
That was a curious fancy.

Duke. Heed it not:
I speculate at times, as well as you.†
But you must alter. You must be gay,
In dress as looks. Now let us part. We'll meet
Presently, in the feasting room.

Guido. I will
Be with you presently, redressed. [*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell.
Redress'd!—Now, what a querulous boy is this,
Cheating his spleen with words. Insolent words!—
Yet he's my son,—poor, poor Bianca's son.
Shall I not curb my fretful nature, when

I think of him?—Ah! yes—I'll strive to think
Not ill of him.—He bears an honest shew.
Were this a time for questioning, I'd ask
Touching those letters, and Vitelli's plots—
'Tis not;—perhaps to-morrow. If he should
Have been abused.—How much his pallid smile
Shone like Bianca's. Oh! I'll love him yet;
And he shall love me too: and yet—and yet—
Ah! thus my fiery and suspicious nature
Preys ever on itself.—I *will* be calm. [*Exit.*

SCENE I.

A Chamber in the Palace.

ISIDORA *and* ISABELLA *enter.*

Isab. Dear sister, had your face little more mirth
How much you'd grace the feast.
Isid. Must I then wear
A mask, my lady?
Isab. No: no need of that.
But what has troubled you?
Isid. O, nothing, nothing.
Isab. Nay, now you deal not fairly with my love.
Isid. Well, he—Lord Guido has been with me.
Isab. Yes.

Isid. He's full of grief: that's all. I did not weep
For that.

Isab. He must not shew this sorrow at the feast
To-day: The Duke is quick, and apt to doubt.
Bid him be cautious there

Isid. We will not meet
Again, tho' we had purposed. Guido has
Told all: one word unto his old regard
He gave, and so we parted.

Isab. This I know.

Isid. You know.

Isab. Ay, my sweet sister: I have seen,—
Had you but seen him, too, and heard him sigh,
It would have moved you. When he said he had
Not even a token to remember you,
I promised—

Isid. What?

Isab. Be not alarmed, dear sister,
But I believe, I promised one: Indeed
Some message you should send, for if a word
(An idle word) escape by chance to-day—
The Duke is jealous.

Isid. Ah! whom can I trust?

Isab. True;—all about the Duke are cunning; stay—
I'll be your messenger; but you must give
The token for him: else he'll not believe.
What bauble shall it be, sister? Ha! this,—
This will be excellent.

Isid. Not that. If you
Must have some pledge, take this: that ruby ring
Was the Duke's gift, and 'tis a favourite.
Isab. Shame!
He will not recognize so poor a thing
As this for your's. Give me your hand; in faith
It is a white one. Now, were I a man
I'd kiss it, sister, thus. [*Takes the ring.*
Isid. Nay, nay; return
That ring to me: I pray you—do return it.
Isab. What shall I say to him?
Isid. Give me the ring.—
The ring.
Isab. I'll trust then to my thoughts; and I
May strengthen your entreaties with my own.
Should he look sad on you, or smile, the Duke
Would madden with strange fears, believe 't.
Isid. Indeed,
I did not know that he—Hark! hark! who comes?
Isab. Perhaps the Duke.
Isid. Ha! then I'll leave you—nay, I must. [*Exit.*
Isab. Farewell. I hate her not, tho' her pale face
Reproaches me. Poor victim! she is in
My toils,—but 'tis to make my child a prince.
That base-born,—he has been preferr'd to mine,
I and my rights were trampled down—ha! now for
My message.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. Must I then put on a look,

And say I am content to all that is,—
To all that has been? Well, 'tis for *her* sake;
And what would I not do for her, tho' she—
She has abandoned me. Poor girl, poor girl!
It is too late to grieve.

Isab. What study's this?
Dear Guido, are you plotting?

Guido. How! I am
As innocent—

Isab. Against the Duchess and the Duke? nay, nay,
I know
All, Sir; your meetings, and her tears. Beware
The Duke.

Guido. My heart's as innocent—

Isab. I know it, but the Duke
Is jealous;—that's the word: and you must not
Awaken him. See; do you know this ring?
'Tis Isidora's.

Guido. Ha!

Isab. She sent it to you.
I told her of your grief—(Nay, do not chide,)
And got this—it will serve, tho' love is over,
To bind your friendship fast.

Guido. She sends me that?

Isab. She sends you this, and bids you smile to-night.

Guido. I'll do 't: but 'twas not needful.

Isab. You will do
This for—

Guido. For friendship, Madam, and no more.

Isab. Take care 'o the ring.

Hush! here comes one who need not know it. Well!—
Well, father?

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. Madam, is the Duchess here?

Isab. She's gone.

Gher. The Duke is waiting, and the feast
Prepared. My lord, your friends are there already.

Guido. I shall be with them, Sir.

Isab. Come hither, father. [*They talk.*

Guido. A feast—for what? And yet 'tis always thus.
Why do I quarrel with 't? When a man dies
They feast and shout—and when a child is born:
And when a father thrusts his last pale girl
Into the arms of age (ah, death!) they feast,
Revel, and dance, and laugh, and mock the night
(The modest ear of night) with riot!—Oh!
Why should I quarrel with it? I am now
The puppet of the day—but I forget:
Now for his highness' feast—I will remember. [*To* ISAB. *Exit.*

Isab. I'll follow you.

Gher. 'Twas a bright star that guided you to-day.

Isab. But should we not—Ha! let me think.

Gher. I have
Been with the Duke; he thought himself at ease,
But with a word I started him: he tried
To laugh away his doubts, and I agreed

That they were nought; and then *supposed* a case—

Isab. Ha! that was well.

Gher. But he sprung up
Sternly and bade me go: and swore he was
Content: and then re-echoed my own words,
On this I essayed again, but all his spirit
Burst forth, and I was ordered straight to quit him.

Isab. He says he's satisfied?

Gher. Madam, his tongue
Proclaims it; but his hand and troubled eye
Give fierce denial,—there's that in his heart,
Which some day must uproot it. But for the ring?

[*Music without.*

Isab. Come this way, and we'll talk: the feast is ready.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Banquetting Room.—Nobles and Ladies assembled.

JULIO *and* CASTI *entering.*

Julio. This is a gallant shew.

Casti. Indeed a fair one:
And yet, 'tis but a shew.

Julio. How do you mean?

Casti. Oh! nothing: merely what I say, no more.

Julio. In faith you puzzle me: ha! what a face
Look, my dear Casti. Do you see that girl
Whose hair is bound with pearls? her cheek is like——
Pshaw!—like—like——

Casti. Like a young rose opening slowly,
Kissed by the breath of May.

Julio. I love a rose.

Casti. *Sir, she was fashioned by the self-same hand,
And with more prodigal beauty than the rose;
Look at her, she will bear a closer glance.
'Tis old Cornelia's child, Camiola—
You 'love a rose'? Kiss her, she'll taste as sweet.

Isabella *enters.*

Julio. I dare not.

Casti. Right: I am her cousin, Sir;
But I will make you known.† Lord Guido comes.

Guido *enters.*

Guido. My father?

Casti. Is not come yet. Let me touch
Your hand.

Guido. Excellent Casti!—*Julio, look! My aunt
Has smiled for you this minute.

Julio. I am gone.

Guido. Am I the hero of this fête, dear Casti?

Casti. You are, and you must honor it.

Guido. I will:
It is the last.—Hark! hark! I hear a sound:

Oh! *she* is coming.

Casti. I hear nothing—nothing.

Come, be a man.

Guido. A wretch.—Now then you hear.

Casti. Ay, now: you're quick of ear.

Guido. Ha! ha! a man who's flayed alive will feel
The merest touch: 'tis thus with me: my ear
Hath drunk in burning tidings; scalding words
Have been thrust near my brain.† [*Music is heard.*

Casti. Your father comes.

Julio. Madam, the Duke is coming. Gentlemen,
His Highness.

DUKE *and* ISIDORA *enter.*

Duke. Sit; Oh! sit.—No more of this
Authority puts off her state to-day,
And for once, we are equal.—Where's my son?
Gentlemen! Friends! I give you all a welcome.
Where is my son?

Guido. My lord!

Duke. Here is an old
Acquaintance, Isidora. Give my son
Welcome. He smiles upon us. [*Aside.*

Isid. Welcome, my lord!

Guido. Madam, I thank you.

Duke. Ha! Count Casti! you
Are known unto my wife; is it not so.

Casti. Slightly I have been honored.

Isid. Welcome, Sir,
Unto Mirandola. The Duke and I
Are glad to see so kind a countenance here.
Duke. Oh! bravely. I shall teach you soon to know
The customs of a court: but, rest you now.—
My friends! I pray ye, sit, and taste your welcome.
But how is this? There should be music here,
To greet my son after his battles.—Bid
The trumpet speak, and the fine thrilling harp
Chime in his ear, 'till every nerve is touched;
And let the flutes (like gentler voices) lend
Their pleasant tones, and the rich viols make,
With all their strings, harmonious noise to-night.
Strike forth, musicians, while the feast proceeds.

Chorus.

Welcome, welcome from afar;
This is thy own festal day.
Welcome from the toil of war,
Son of great Mirandola.

Julio. That was a pleasant strain.
Lady. Most pleasant Sir.
Duke. Stir not. [DUKE *and* ISIDORA *rise.*] O! fair
Camiola, take heed.—You do not wear
The ring I gave you, dearest. How was this?

Isid. The ring?

Duke. Aye, love: the ring I chose
From out a hundred, ruby cased in gold,
Shaped like a cross; I kissed it on your hand,
And swore upon that cross to love you ever.
Where is it?—But no matter; when we feast
Again, remember it—my favorite ring.

Isid. I will, my lord.

Duke. Now sit.—Give me a bowl
Of wine!—There is a troubled spirit still
Hanging about my heart. Some wine—enough.
I'll drown it quickly.—What a sparkling crown
(Beaded too royally) floats on the top
Of this clear liquid now, and tempts my taste.
Guido, my son, health and fair life be yours;
Your father speaks it with an earnest voice.

Guido. But, for the heart——

Casti. Nay, now I disagree.
Methinks his heart is in it.

Guido. Excellent friend,
You always teach me well.—Father, I thank you.

Duke. There is a cordial something in that word.
Father!—'twas thus he spoke, for the first time
Since his return, I think: 'Father!'—How lovely
My young bride looks. Beautiful, beautiful love!
How fair—how utterly without a peer
She is!—Apostate that I was to doubt:

And yet I did not: no, no, no: I did not.
Is that Hypolito?

Hyp. Yes, my dear lord.

Duke. Oh! reveller!—
Sister, I have not noticed you; forgive 't.
My heart was full of trouble and deep joy;
Strange company, you'll say for one so wise
As I am thought to be: but so it is.

Isab. What was the matter with my sister?

Duke. When?

Isab. Just now: she seemed to shrink.

Duke. From me? from *me?*
†Oh! you mistake. More wine: fill high!
Gentlemen! a brave welcome to my son!
Guido, may discord never, never come
Between us.—Bring a goblet hither, Sirs,
And let him taste his welcome. Let the health
Pass round, and no one slight it. My dear son,
Give me your hand.—At Mantua once this——Ah!—
[*He sees the ring.*

Julio. Look!—What's the matter with the Duke?

Guido. My lord!

Hyp. Look at my uncle, mother!

Isab. Sir, be still!

Lord. Come forward—How?

Isid. My lord!—Ha!

Guido. Father, speak,
What means this?

Duke. Nothing. I am quiet—calm.
The heaven's are o'er us, and it may be—nothing.
It may be—Ha! begone! – Now, now, for ever
I cast aside goodness and faith and love,
No more to be put on—masks as they are,
To hide the base and villainous tricks of men.
Break up the feast! All leave us!—O bright Heaven!
Laugh you in scorn upon me! See it shines
Right through the windows, and the nodding pines
Shake their black heads and mock me.—Shall I swear
To kill? [*The guests go out.*

Guido. Father!

Duke. That is——

Guido. My lord!

Duke. A lie,
Monstrous and foul, not to be said or thought.

Isid. My gracious lord!

Duke. False painted thing, begone!

Isab. Nay—

Duke Sister, will you drive me mad—outrageous?
I am abused—abused, I tell you. Ha!
Now do you start?

Isab. Retire, sweet Isidora:
And you, dear Guido, bid Gheraldi come.

Guido. Poor Isidora!—What a fate is thine?

[Guido *and* Isidora *exeunt.*]

Duke. Just when I had forgiven—almost forgot
All his most insolent taunts, all, and her cold
Unwilling smiles that made—that make me mad.

I could have loved her—like a fiery star,
I could have bent before her from my path
And worshipped her as something holy.—Now,
O, now!—

Isab. Dear brother!

Duke. Still am I the Duke.
Must you too put aside respect? No matter.
I'll keep my way alone, and burn away—
Evil or good I care not, so I spread
Tremendous desolation on my road:—
I'll be remembered as huge meteors are,
From the dismay they scatter.

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. Gracious Sir!—

Duke. I wish to be alone.
O earth and heaven! so fair, so lovely, yet
To be a—wretch. Now for all future time
I'll hate all things which seem as they were true,
For then they're false, I know. What *I* am
I care not.—Father, draw yon curtain down;
Those sycophant branches with their bending leaves
Mock me: they mock my misery—my pain.
O how my heart aches!

Isab. Brother, be composed.

Duke. I cannot.—Will you pour upon my brain
Oblivion, or sweet balm over my heart?
No: then you jeer me when you bid me still
Be calm.—Would I were dull as Lethe is!

Or dead—dead: that were better; yet not so,
For I will live to be a terror still.

Gher. *My lord!—

Duke. And yet,—were it not better, now,
To leave the world at once, and pass my age
In cell or forest?—this has been.†

Gher. My lord!
Perhaps the lady Isidora——

Duke. Slave!
That word destroys me—tears me,—heart and soul.
Cannot I dream, or sleep, but thou must be
(My black familiar) at my elbow? Monk!
I hate your fawning—(Sister, stay your speech,)
I hate your sly insinuating smiles,
Your tongue that mocks your eyes, and tells a tale
As foul as night. I will not trust that tongue;
No, nor your eye, for both may be—are false.
Audacious slave!

Isab. Dear brother, I must speak.

Duke. I've heard of men who in a moment have
Done deeds of blood; but I——I will not thus
Redden my memory. Leave us, Monk—Begone!

[GHERALDI *exit.*

Isab. Dear brother, you——

Duke. And you too go.
Go, Isabella:—Nay, it must be so.
Leave me to think.

Isab. Farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. To think—of what?
Of hell and all its horrors; for this earth,
It seems, may have a hell as full of pains,
And burning torture as was ever hid
In the dark bowels of the rolling world.
Places there are, 'tis said, where ill-starred souls
Pine amongst flames. My flames are in the heart,
And in the head—the brain, and every nerve.
And every trembling muscle of my frame.
O this hot ague! and my parching tongue
Clings close and closer still, and thro' my eyes
Run blood and fire, and—Ah!—O false, false, false!
Hush! some one comes. What! shall the Prince be jeered?
I'll fly into some corner dark as night. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Anti-room of the Duke's Apartments.

CURIO *waiting.*

Isab. (entering) Where is the Duke?
Curio. Now in his chamber, Madam:
But he has given orders that no one
Shall have admittance.
Isab. I *must* go to him.
Curio. Madam, you know how violent is the Duke:
He bid me keep the door.
Isab. Go in, go in, Sir,
And tell him that I wish to see him, straight,
The matter's urgent. Go, Sir. [CURIO *exit.*
Casti. (Without.) Where is Lord Guido?
Isab. How!

CASTI *enters with a letter.*

Well, Sir?—
Casti. Where is he,—Guido?
Isab. Where?

Casti. I must
See him directly. Can you not tell me where?
Isab. Perhaps—
Casti. Yes, yes.
Isab. And yet he will not walk
To-night, tho' 'tis his hour:—but he may be
In the confessor's chamber. Do you know 't?
Casti. I'll find it, Madam.
Isab. Yet it were as well,
If you should try the terrace first.
Casti. I'll do 't. [*Exit.*
Isab. That was well thought: now we have time at least.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. May I come in?
Isab. Come in: I cannot gain
Admittance.
Guido. I must see my father, Madam,
Let what will follow it.
Isab. Do you know yet
What caused my brother's frenzy at the feast?
'Twas strange!
Guido. Strange! It was madness.
Half of the ills we hoard within our hearts
Are ills because we hoard them. A fair tale
Will ever put down scandal, and the Duke
Wants but an open story. I will see him,
By Heaven!

Isab. Be patient!

Guido. Shall my heart be wrung
At every turn, and I know not the cause?
I were a fool indeed—Well, Sir, the Duke?

CURIO *re-enters.*

Curio. Madam, I dare not enter.

Guido. Fool!—then I
Will go myself.

Isab. No, no; I'll see him first. Trust me for once.
A woman's words————

Guido. Then linger not.

Isab. How's this? I've heard no noise.

Curio. Madam, nor I
For the last hour.

Guido. Great Heaven! what can it mean?

Isab. Has he not spoken?

Curio. No.

Guido. Nor moved?

Curio. He has not.

Guido. I will go in, let what will happen.

Isab. Stay!

Curio. I'll venture since it must be so, my lord.
But may I beg you to withdraw.—This way.

Guido. It cannot be.—Poor father!

Curio. This way, Madam:
And I entreat your silence.

Isab. Come: this way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Duke's Chamber.

The Duke is sitting alone.

Curio. [*entering.*] He sleeps: Hush!—no, wide awake.
My lord! the lady Isabella is here.
My lord!—He does not answer me. My lord!
Ha! Madam, Madam, enter—Look!

ISABELLA *enters.*

Isab. What's this?
Leave us. [*Exit* CURIO.] Dear brother, will you be the talk
Of your own servants? Give me your hand: how cold!
Speak!—why are you alone?

Duke. Alone—alone.

Isab Nay, this
Is idle.

Duke. Who—Ah! sister, is it you?
'Tis a cold day—dull as December.

Isab. 'Tis
Indeed a wretched day.

Duke. Indeed? Ah! now
I recollect.—Oh! mercy! mercy!—Hear
Heaven and earth and air, if I——if I——
But no, I will not curse them: thro' the world
A curse will follow them, like the black plague
Tracking their footsteps ever,—day and night—
Morning and eve,—summer and winter,—ever,
I would not be a wretch so followed for
The wide supremacy of all the air.
I'd not be such a wretch—O Heaven! O Heaven!
Am I not worse than they are?

Isab. Worse,—how worse?

Duke. Oh, more—more desolate.

Isab. Guido.

Duke. No more.

Isab. He asks to see you.

Duke. We will meet hereafter:
In the world, never. In the grave perhaps—
In the dark common chamber of the dead
We'll visit, where upon his shadowy steed
(Pale as a corpse) the speechless phantom rides,
Our king and enemy: there, friends and foes
Meet without passions, and the sickly light
That glimmers thro' the populous homes of death
Will be enough to find us. We shall know
Each other there, perhaps.

Isab. His was indeed
A grievous fault; but he may mend. He's shrewd,

And he may clear himself. Shall he come in?

Duke. No: and when I talk thus—thus calmly, you
Know well I mean my words.

Isab. Nay——

Duke. Nay; I am
As firm as marble: fixed as fate: no more.
*Now, what's the day's amusement? Is 't to hunt,
Or fish, or sail, or fly the falcon?—what?
Or shall we drop upon our knees and pray?†

Isab. He says he must be heard.

Duke. He must? Must!—Then
Bid him come in.

Isab. You jest.

Duke. Not I, by justice!—So—[*sits*] that's well. I seem
To sit in judgment. Were the world before me—
The sinner, and the saint,—the prodigal,
And he who hoards his gold, and they who give
Not even a thought in charity,—base slaves,
Stabbers and thieves, and parricides, I'd hold
The balance firmly. Isabella, go.
Sirs, bid my son approach.

Isab. I fear—well, well. [*Exit.*

Duke. There was a Roman who condemned his son
*To death. I'll pass a gentler sentence, tho'
I am myself the victim. It is strange;
But I do feel within me a calm glow,
As tho' the words I am about to say

Bore on their sound conviction. Can it be
That I have erred? Away, away:—if ever
I rise to hope I shall grow wild again.
Despair is better.† Hark! he comes; my blood
Is half in tumult,—yet I will be calm.

GUIDO *enters.*

Guido. Father!

Duke. Lord Guido, I am told you wish
An audience; is it so?

Guido. It is.

Duke. Speak on.
If you have suffered wrong and pray relief,
Why, you should have it.—If you have done wrong,
The church is open, and the gate of Heaven
Wide for a true repenter.

Guido. Oh! my lord,
I beg you to cast off this garb.

Duke. It is
The garb of justice; treat it with honour, Sir,
As you may hope to thrive. Well!

Guido. Why is this?

Duke. Why! have you aught to ask? if so, speak on.

Guido. My lord, I know not how it is, but you
Who (if I must speak truth) have wrong'd *me* much,
Assume the injured man. What have I done?—
You will not answer?—no?

Duke. Go on, go on.
I like your boldness,—not your spirit. Well!
Guido. What have I done, my lord?
Duke. What done!—but speak.
Guido. You think me traitor, as I hear; but surely
I were a sorry knave, to plot against
The state which will be mine.
Duke. Be not too sure.
Proceed.
Guido. That 's as you will, my lord:—but away with this.
My lord, my lord! I ask you, can I be
The same in soul as when we fought at Mantua—
Together,—side by side? I hate to name it:
But, did I not—I ask you, did I not
Once do you service?
Duke. Yes: I own to that.
You speak it doubtfully: you saved my life.
Pray, be not sparing. I can bear it all.
Guido. Have I deserved this, Sir? Great Heaven!
Duke. Silence!
You have affronted Heaven; and the sad day
(Now dying) leaves a blush upon the face
Of the great sky, faint as your honour.—You
Have practised against Heaven,—against me.
Guido. I have not, by my hopes: nay, hear me swear—
If I have done—done what? I know not what.
But if I ever gave you cause to hate me,—

If I have wronged you by myself, or e'er
Conspired with others,—plotted, writ, or thought,—
Nay, if I ever heard of foes to you
And lent them help or countenance—strike me down!
I call on you, bright Heaven! I call on all
Your terrible thunders and blue darting fires
Quickly to come upon me. If my words
Are false, strike me to nothing!

Duke. Well, Sir, I
Have heard.

Guido. And doubt me still?

Duke. Doubt!
If you have said? you have: why then good even.
Now we may go and pray.

Guido. Once more.—That ring—
(The Duchess' ring) was given me as a pledge
Of a pure friendship.

Duke. Ha!

Guido. Oh! my lord, do not doubt me.—Once more, Sir,
I ask you to remember what I was,
And now believe.—My lord!—Nay,—not a word?
Not one?—Then is my purpose strong. My lord,
I see that 'tis in vain to hope to stay
In quiet at Mirandola. Each hour
Would bring a host of troubles and of fears
On me,—or both, perhaps: and I've enough.
Therefore, unless your highness orders that

I must remain, I purpose speedily
(To-night, indeed) to travel.
Duke. Travel!—where?
Where do you think to travel?
Guido. I know not where: somewhere about the world.
What matters it where I am?
Duke. This is sudden.
Your resolution's sudden,—but 'tis wise.
You have my full consent,—my wish: what more?
Guido. Will you not say farewell?
Duke. [*rising.*] Shall you stop first
At Naples?
Guido. First at Rome.
Duke. Perhaps you may hear further from me there.
Guido. Yet say farewell.
Duke. Farewell.
Guido. Oh, Father, I
Am going far—for ever. This cold hand,
Which now I stretch abroad towards you,—now,
You'll never touch again.
Duke. Farewell!—Mountains and seas
Must rise and roll between us: then, perhaps,
We may be friends again. I loved you once—
Once for your mother's sake; ay, for your own.
I had brave hopes, but you have blighted them;—
But I may write to Rome.
Guido. I hope you will.

Duke. If what I think is wrong : no matter, you
Shall hear from me at Rome.
Guido. At Rome, then.
Duke. If
My power, or my purse be wanting—ever,
(Death ! I shall play the fool !)—if ever I
Can serve you, let me know, and 't shall be done.
This from my old affection will I do.
Some one has used me ill—some one has struck
And tortured me. Let me look on you.—You
Had always a brave look ;—ay, from a boy.
Guido. I wore my innocence there, and in my heart.
Duke. Well, well ; no more ; you'll see the Duchess
ere
You leave us.
Guido. No, my lord.
Duke. You'll see her ? Nay——
Guido. 'Tis better not. I leave Mirandola
To-night.
Duke. But first——
Guido. Pray, spare me.
Duke. Then —why then
Fare you well, Guido ; for it must come to that
At last.—Farewell ! yet, wheresoe'er you go,
Still do not quite forget Mirandola.
You have had happy hours and pleasant thoughts,
And I—I have had some : in infancy
I—(tho' I was a prince) would not confide

My son to hirelings. I have stood and watched
You sleeping, (then I dared not own you, for
My father lived,) while poor Bianca wept.
Oh! I have watch'd you with a cotter's care,
Thro' many and many a night:—'tis so; and now
Mountains and stormy seas will come between
Our hearts. While you are wandering, I shall be
Shut in my palace,—prisoned up,—a slave:
What else are princes ever? but I'll write
To Rome.

Guido. I shall expect it.

Duke. Confide in me.
I thought I had a word or two to say,
But they are gone;—the common things, perhaps,
Men say at parting: likely nothing more.
You may return: if not, why let us part
Like friends at least: hate is a galling load
To bear in absence; so—farewell. Oh! Guido!
[*Embraces him.*
And now, no more. Farewell!

Guido. Once more, farewell,
Farewell! [*Exit.*

Duke. Farewell! The kindest breath of Heaven
Rest on your head and hallow it.—My son!
My only son! and is he gone for ever?
How *I have* loved him let these tremulous hands
Proclaim, and these my weeping woman's eyes,
Not often stained with tears.—Farewell, once more.

Son of my youth! And now I'll take one look
At the blue sky, and taste the scents which hang
Around the flowers.—Methinks I feel again
My stature princely, and still running clear
The high blood of Mirandola. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Apartment of the Confessor.

GHERALDI *discovered at a Table, with Papers; and a Chest open, to and from which he goes.*

Gher. Now, haughty lady, now indeed thy nets
Are closing round thy victims: but thou art
Thyself within my mesh.—I want thy help,
To thrust me in the conclave; until then
I'll keep thy secrets safely,—and thy letters.
Ha! this—[*Reads.*] "To Guido de Mirandola,
Naples."—That Gaspero had an honest look;
And yet he was a knave. This—"To the Father
Gheraldi." Signed "Thy true friend Isabella."
This is my bill on fortune—"thy true friend."
And here are Guido's letters to the Duke
I would not lose them for a mitre. But
There is another——Ha! [*Goes to the chest.*

CASTI *enters suddenly.*

Casti. Is not Lord Guido here?

Gher. Signior!—Lord Guido?

Casti. Ay, Sir, Lord Guido.—I must see him quickly. Why, what's the matter, Monk?

Guido. [*Within.*] In this room, say you?

Casti. Ha! that is his voice?

GUIDO *enters.*

My dear Guido! I want
Some private words—I want to have some speech
With the lord Guido, Sir.

Gher. With the lord Guido?

Casti. Death!
Do you not hear? We wish to talk in private.

Guido. You'll trust us in your room awhile, Gheraldi?

Gher. My lord,—my papers.

Casti. Never mind them, Monk.
How! do you think we wish to learn how well
You turn a cunning verse? leave 'em and go.

Gher. My lord, I must—

Guido. How!—I have spoken, Sir, [*Waves him off.*
Some minutes hence you may return.

Gher. But first— [*Seizes the papers.*

Casti. Begone! [*As Gheraldi goes, he thrusts the papers into his robe:—some fall, as Casti hurries him out.*

Casti. Now,
I have a message.
Guido. You must say it quickly;
For I am going.
Casti. Going—where?
Guido. I leave
Mirandola this hour.
Casti. For what? for what?
Guido. My friend, the Duke and I must part. Nay, spare me:
It is determined on. I go to-night.
Casti. To-night you must not; for the Duchess asks,—
Implores a meeting with you.—In my hand
I hold her letter: look! 'twas written with
A trembling heart.
Guido. Poor Isidora! so
Thy young heart trembled when it wrote to me.
[*Reads.*] Ha! Casti—stay, stay: how! to-night? to-night?
It cannot be: I've said——
Casti. And I have sworn,
Upon the Duchess' hand, that you shall see her.
You must—Oh! no excusing.
Guido. My dear friend,
There are some trials which the mind (tho' made
Ev'n hard by sorrow) cannot go through well:
Such one is this.

Casti. She wept,—do you not hear?
She wept and bade me as I loved her honour,
Her life,—to bring you to her.
Guido. How can I
See her? I go this hour.
Casti. You can, you can:
Cannot you leave your horses at the inn
(The first you arrive at) near the mountains? then
You can return alone, wrapt in your cloak.
Who'll know of this? 'tis easy. Why, the night
Itself will shroud you well.
Guido. But should the Duke——
Casti. Do I not tell you that perhaps her life—
Her very life's at stake.
Guido. Well!—
Casti. Well—you must do't.
Guido. We must be secret; yes,
We must be very secret,—but I'll do't.
There is a fate in this. *I seem to go
Calmly, yet with a melancholy step,
Onwards and onwards.—Is there not a tale
Of some man, (an Arabian as I think,)
Who sailed upon the wide sea many days,
Tossing about, the sport of winds and waters,
Until he saw an isle, towards which his ship
Turned suddenly?—there is: and he was drawn,
As by a magnet on, slowly, until
The vessel neared the isle: and then, it flew

Quick as a shooting star, and dash'd itself
To pieces. Methinks I am this man.†—But be it.
I'll go to Isidora.

ANDREA *and* CARLO *enter.*

Casti. Well!

Andrea. My lord,
Your horses wait.

Casti. Now?

Andrea. In the court, my lord.

Guido. Farewell, then: I shall see you once more.

Casti. You
Will not deceive me?

Guido. I will not, my friend.
I'll see you after I have seen her: now,
Farewell.

Casti. Farewell then.—I will stay
Here; lest our parting (colder than should be
'Tween friends) give rise to doubts.

Guido. Right.—Fare thee well!

[*Exeunt* GUIDO, ANDREA *and* CARLO.

Casti. Poor Guido!—I have done my task; altho'
I hate these secret meetings. What I do
I wish the sun to see; yet, I have been
A messenger to him:—Well, perhaps—— So,

[*takes up the papers.*

What have we?—the monk's homilies, or—Ha!

What !—to Lord Guido, signed by—by the Duke?
Death ! it all strikes upon me. This is not
[*opens the pacquet.*
A time for doubting. What is this? Ah ! Heaven !

GHERALDI *enters.*

Gher. I must have dropped some—Ha ! Signior !
My lord, this is not well. My lord, I say !

Casti. Begone, thou villain !—This (*reads*) from Guido to
The Duke?

Gher. Give me my letters, Sir.

Casti. Another !—How !
Oh ! mercy ! thou'rt betray'd, poor friend, betray'd.
Thou avarice bitten slave !

Gher. Give—give me but
Those letters, Sir, and you shall have——

Casti. Insolent slave !

Gher. Not for myself, not for myself, my lord;
But for the lady Isabella.

Casti. Ha !

Gher. She'll thank you—she'll reward you: you shall have—
I know not what.

Casti. By Heaven, her writings here
To you—to you, you mean, and loathsome worm !
Ha ! signed "your true friend Isabella."
[*He reads, holding the letters away from* GHERALDI.

Gher. Sir—
My lord ! my lord ! [*Clings to* CASTI.

Casti. 'Tis here, 'tis here! Begone! I see it now—
I see it all.—Oh, Guido! poor lost friend!
But it is here—thy proof! and *thy* proof too,
Thou double slave!—Begone!

Gher. I'll give you all!—
I have a mighty hoard—of gold—of gems—

Casti. Unloose me, villain!—This shall to the Duke!

Gher. My lord, my life is in it.

Casti. Guido's life:
His honor! but they shall be saved. Begone!

Gher. I cannot—will not.

Casti. Slave! Ha! villain, down!

Gher. My lord, I'll be for ever—I will kneel—

Casti. Hence!—Now we triumph.

Gher. Go not!

Casti. To the Duke:
Ay, to the Duke in triumph: Thou shalt be—
Begone!—Ha! villain!—Nay, then thus I dash
You down for ever.—Hence!—Now then, my friend,
Now victory is ours. Honor—thy father's love,
Saved, and thy princely name made clear for ever.
Now for the Duke.—Away!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Apartment of the Duchess.

DUKE, ISIDORA.

Duke. Sweet, talk no more of this. Sorrow has past
Over us like a storm:—my heart is stilled;
And, though more lonely than I thought to live,
We'll make the best of life. *Poor policy
It is to shun the few bright hours that come,
'Cause more are absent from us. Let us be
Happy, love, if not gay.† Come; sit beside me.
Why do you stand, dear Isidora?

Isid. I——

[*Aside*] The hour is past: he must be waiting. Now
Excuse me.

Duke. Presently. Come sit by me;
And let me tell you once more how I love you,
How utterly and self-abandoned I

Gave my whole soul to you. Oh! pardon, then,
(Pardon for this devotion's sake,) that I
Ever pronounced a word that look'd like anger,
Fear, or a false mistrust. I gave up all:
Could I ask less than all? Why, what is 't moves you?
Isid. [*aside.*] How shall I pass?—I will return.
Duke. How 's this? have you lost aught?
Isid. Yes, my lord, yes. I—I shall not be long
Ere I return.
Duke. Well; go then, if it must
Be so: but take heed, dearest; do not walk
Abroad so late again. I would not have
Evil to meet you for—for the wide world.
Quickly return.
Isid. I will, my lord, I will. [*Exit* ISIDORA.
Duke. The calm I feel upon me is more like
A leaden grief than joy,—and yet 'tis joy:
Not the high buoyant spirit which lit up
Mine eye this morning: 'tis a sullen light,
But it has full possession. Every nerve
Is laden with a strange and lulling charm,
As tho' I had drank of poppies, yet alive
To the least touch. A sound would startle me.
Hark!—no.—What could my Isidora mean?
She trembled, yet she is not wont to tremble for
A trifling loss. 'Twas odd.—Again! Who's there?
Isabella [*without.*] Brother!
Duke. Come in, come in.

ISABELLA *enters.*

Why, what is this?
Are you not well?
Isab. Not quite. Dear brother, where—
Where is the Duchess?
Duke. Gone. She will return
Quickly: till then, remain.
Isab. Did she go out
Lately?
Duke. But now unto her chamber.
Isab. Then
It could not be; and yet—no, 't could not be.
Duke. What could not be?
Isab. Dear brother!
Duke. What is this?
Speak, Isabella.—By the gods, you seem
Born to perplex me. Speak out.
Isab. It is nothing.
Duke. Nothing?
Isab. Perhaps 'tis nothing.
Duke. I shall be
Vexed beyond all my reason. *I thank the stars
I am not of that humour which delights
In fretting this and that man,—thus and thus,
With question and no answer,—flat denial,
And then "perhaps," and "it may not be so;"—
I hate it all. By Jupiter, if I

Had now a secret (good or ill no matter)
Which it became a friend to know——
Isab. What then?
Duke. I'd speak it boldly.†
Isab. Then—why then—I cannot.
Duke. Gods! give me patience.—Isabella, if
You cannot speak, leave me; (I am not used
To talk thus, but you fret me.) Secret!—what?
What secret can it be? Ha!—no, no, no.
You asked me of the Duchess?
Isab. Did she go
Unto her chamber?
Duke. Yes.
Isab. You're sure of that?
Duke. Sure? yes; where else? sure! sure!
Isab. Then I am wrong.
Duke. Darkness and death! speak out—what is it?
Isab. Nay,
Be calm.
Duke. As the loud thunder:—Well; I'm calm.
Isab. I thought I saw
Beneath the moonlight————
Duke. Yes; go on, go on.
Isab. I would not tell you, but I cannot live
And see you wronged.
Duke. Go on.
Isab. I thought I saw
Guido, and——

Duke. Hell!—but no, it cannot be.
Isab. And yet, my servant, Pesaro——
Duke. Drag him in.
Isab. I'll bring him to you. [*Exit.*
Duke. Haste: make haste.—Oh, shame!
My son!—If it be so?—If it be—Why then
Come forth, thou power of Darkness! Come abroad
And shroud the world!- No;—rather let there be
Earthquake, and tumbling towns, and fiery rain,
Vapours, and spotted fever,—thick disease—

ISABELLA *re-enters.*

Ah! sister—Well; where is he?
Isab. Come in!

PESARO *enters.*

Duke. Now,———
Isab. Be calm. Speak, Pesaro.
Pes. My lord!—If I——
Duke. Plagues blister you. Villain, speak on
Whom have you seen? seen what?
Pes. Lord Guido.
Duke. That
Is false: he has left the city.
Pes. Yes, my lord:
But he returned. I saw him near the barrier,
(Wrapped in his cloak) not half an hour ago:
And now——
Duke. I dream.

Isab. Well, well; you saw——?
Pes. Just now
I saw him in the garden.
Isab. And alone?
Pes. I think I saw the Duchess.
Isab. Now leave us.
Brother! [*Exit.* Pesaro.
Duke. Look down, look down!
Isab. I should have thought
Less of this strange return, had I not seen him
(Yet why should that have struck me?) smile upon
That ring.
Duke. Ha!
Isab. When he parted with you—yes:
And then—how can I bear to name it? Yet,
Your court all smile and talk of this—their past
Love, and their—meeting in her chamber.
Duke. Ring! Chamber! I loiter:—I will have
Such—such revenge. Where is my dagger—where?
I cannot find 't; 'tis better. I will have
Vengeance in open day.
Isab. Nay,—[*Interposing.*]
Duke. Death and shame!
Away, away! [*Rushes out.*
Isab. He's gone.—I almost tremble.
And yet I will not. I, who never yet
Knew what it was to fear,—shall I shrink now?
He's gone, and they—no, no; he will not find

My victims soon.—My son shall be a prince.
A prince !—a noble sound.—I tremble still.
Who's there ?—What noise is that ?

CASTI *comes in suddenly with papers, followed by* GHERALDI.

Casti. Where is the Duke ?
Gher. Thank God ! he is not here.
Isab. What means this tumult, Sir ?
Casti. Oh ! lady you—
Are you there ? Shame ! where is the Duke ?
[*Enters an apartment.*
Gher. He has
Discovered all.—What shall be done ?
Isab. Hush ! I
Must think.—Meantime call you the guard.
Quick, quick ! Ha ! I must stop this choleric sir.
[GHERALDI *exit.*
Casti. [*returning.*] He is not there ; Madam ! Nay,
I must pass.
Isab. Ha !—ha ! what is this outrage ? Guards !
Casti. By Heaven ! [*attempts to pass her.*
Isab. Within there—Guards, I say !

GHERALDI, PESARO *and Soldiers enter.*

Count Casti has
Forgot himself, and me. You will take care
The Count does not escape. Confine him, Sir,
Until my brother is at leisure. I
Will answer this : he has done outrage here.

Casti. I have some news, good Lucio,—news to tell
The Duke; so give me way.

[*Thrusts the papers in his bosom.*

Isab. Sir, take him hence.

Casti. Madam————

Isab. Away! [*Exeunt soldiers, &c. with* CASTI.

Ghcr. Madam, you are a quick contriver.

Isab. Now,
Let us go hence: no talk.—There is a thing
That now will soon be done; and then our cares
(My cares) are over. If I die, my son
Reigns in Mirandola. And yet, take care
The Count is safe.—I have a task elsewhere.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Garden.—Clouded Moonlight.

GUIDO, ISIDORA.

Isid. When I wrote to you I knew not
That ye were reconciled. Oh! had I known
That you had left Mirandola, for the world
I'd not have put you in this peril: but
That ring—it seemed to me honor and life.

Guido. Not life.

Isid. Oh! yes, to me: his violent spirit would
Soon have destroyed me. Even now, should he learn

Of this our meeting—Oh! I fear, I fear—
Nay, give it to me.
Guido. My pretty ring! must you then have it?
Isid. Yes.
And 'tis not well indeed, my lord, that you
Should wear my favors now. Some busy tongues
May talk.
Guido. Oh! Isidora, is it come
To this? Must innocence so scant her looks,
Or modesty be dumb, lest the base crowd
Abuse her? *Oh! fair Heaven, they're bitter times
And doubtful when a breath of air may blow
Our names away.† But take it. [*Gives the ring.*] See—
I part with my last good, but 'tis to thee.
When I am gone—Shame on this blinding tear!
One drop, and yet how bitter!
Isid. Talk not thus:
You may return.
Guido. Oh! never shall that be.
*There is a period in the days of men,
Beyond which they never thrive. I have seen mine:
Now, all is darkness and decay.†
Isid. Alas!
Guido. Oh! weep not, weep not, Isidora. You
Had once a braver spirit.
Isid. I will try
To say farewell calmly.

Guido. Sweet blessings rest
Upon your head for ever!—I shall go
Afar; yet do not thou forget me. We
Have known each other long. Fortune has been
Our foe. Our very youth is gone before
It's time, and we must part.—*Oh! Isidora,
Think of me sometimes: amidst crowds and revels
You'll be a queen: pomp and admiring eyes
Will follow you, and delicate music, like
Incense from Heav'n, will haunt around your rooms.
Yet, in the midst of all do not forget
The mountain song we used to sing together:
'Tis long ago; but 'twas a pleasant strain.
I love it still; better methinks than ever.
Isid. Do not talk thus. I cannot bear it.
Guido. Nay,
Weep not. Poor Isidora!
Isid. Poor, indeed.
Guido. Give me your hand, once more.†
Isid. Oh! Guido! Guido!
Guido. We must part, dear friend.
And I must say—what must at last be said:
Tis only—this:—I cannot, by the light
Of Heaven, I cannot say it. What! Farewell
To thee, whom I have loved—Oh! loved beyond
All words, all parallel, by day and night,
In health, in sickness, amidst toils and dangers——?
By heaven, I cannot do 't.

Isid. Hush! what is that?
Guido. O Night!
Isid. Hush!—no, 'twas nothing. Now—
Guido. Farewell!
Must it be so, indeed?
Isid. It must.
Guido. Why then
Farewell; and yet—there is a boon at parting
Which mere acquaintance to each other give:
Shall it be less with us? Oh! we have loved
Dearly and long.
Isid. That 's past.

DUKE *rushes in, and stops suddenly.*

Duke. I've sought 'em—Ha!
Guido. Nay, Isidora!—
Duke Ha! ha! ha!—Oh! Devils.
Winter, and blight, and famine strike ye down:
And fires, broad as the deluge, rain, 'till they
Scorch all the land up,—all.
Guido. Shun not my last
Request; it is my last.—*Tho' dark fortune puts
Her arm between us, every gentle proof
Of what has been, we need not cast aside.
Oh! weep not.† Let me take one kiss away
In memory of thee—one: it will be
The saddest, yet the sweetest,—and the last.
Isid. No, Guido

Guido. Then farewell: shrink not.
Isid. I faint. Your father—[*Sinks against* Guido.
Guido. Tremble not. Where is he?

Duke *rushes forward.*

Duke. Here!—
Here, serpents!—Now the everlasting curse
Cling to ye both and wither. May ye both
Wander about————
Guido. I————
Duke. Wretch!—wander about
The world,—the wide world, hopeless, vile, abhorred.
But no; for you—(will my head burst?) for you,
Delicate Sin, begone—yet stay: if e'er
You shall repent—repent of what? ha, ha!
Who's the accuser? none: who will believe
That I'm abused, abused? who'll swear? none, none.
Ha, ha!—O Death and Night!
Guido. Will you not hear?
Duke. Ay, when you die I'll listen,—I'll rejoice.
Will you have trial? never: there are crimes
Which the law touches not; but I'll have blood
Red as the Arab gulph: not your's, but you—
You with the curse of Cain—worse, worse—with all
The blight of parricide upon you—Son!
(No son of mine!)—Ah!—how my tongue is parched—
Dry as a withered scroll.—I will have such

Vengeance—such mighty vengeance.

Guido. Once more—nay—

Duke. Parricide!

Guido. 'Tis in vain.

Isid. Alas! Alas!

Duke. What! do you weep and cheat me of all tears? But I'll have justice.

Guido. Yet hear!

Duke. Not a word:

No, not a word. I listened once, and died.
Ho, ho!—the world's abroad: lights! torches! so——
Come on, come on.

Guido. Spare *her*. For me—

Duke. For you

There is a something yet. Come in, I say.
My soul is white.—How my head throbs! Stir not.
Where am I?

Curio, Piero, *Guards and Attendants enter.*

Curio. Stay! What tumult is there here?
Your highness?

Duke. Where? The Duke is dead—is dead.
He died, Sir, when his wife and son forsook him:
But I am here to represent his state,
And it shall find full justice. Where's the throne?
Vanish'd, alas!—no matter. I will sit
Beneath the stars. *(sits)*—Roll back those curtains, which
Hide the pale visage of the moon. And now,
I call upon the assembled lights of Heaven;

And on the immortality of Truth,
Upon white Chastity, and crown'd Revenge,
To attest what here I do. Traitors! draw near.
What have ye—(Mark! the huge and ponderous sky
Hangs right above your heads,)—to say? Speak forth!

Guido. Father!

Duke. I'll not admit that voice; 'tis perjured. Hark!
Did it not thunder then? no: all is still—
Calm as despair.

Isid. *My lord!

Duke. Hush! Music.—Hush! [Isid. *comes forward.*
Ah! is it you?†

Isid. Spare him, O spare him!

Duke. Never.

Piero. If————

Duke. If a word is spoken, but a word,—

Guido. Nay, hear me.
That ring, that ring——

Duke. Ha! do you taunt me, villain?
Blights wither you!

Isid. Alas!

Duke. Come hither, slave!
You, sirrah! what's your name? no matter. Take
Yon man into the palace-court, and there—
Come nearer—near. [*Whispers officer.*
Remember!

Isid. (Shrieks.) Ha!—What's that?
Oh! mercy, mercy. Spare him—spare us both.
My lord!—O husband!
Guido. Sweet, implore no more.
My fate is come. I'll meet it as a man.
Of thee I dare not think: but *thou*—
Duke. Speak on.
You shall have licence,—once—but once. Speak on.
Guido. Thou hast abused
Thy trusts of father, husband, prince.
Isid. No, no.
Guido. Thou hast, to glut a base and bitter hate,
Destroyed thine only son. Angels now look
Upon us, and before their homes I swear
That I am innocent. Remember this.
For her who stands palely beside you there,
(A star amidst this darkness,) she is pure
As Heaven. I speak this with a dying tongue.
I loved her————
Duke. Ha! shall this be said? Away,
Away, I say! If once I swear—— [*Rises.*
Guido. One word,—
Isid. One word.
Guido. Poor Isidora!
Isid. One——
Guido. One word's enough. My lord, when I depart,
To where—no matter, mark me. I shall tread
With the same step,—the same bold, faithful step,

Which bore me on, 'midst fire and carnage, when
I saved your life at Mantua.—Now, lead on.

[Guido *exit with officers.*

Duke. [*Sinks down.*] He's gone.

Isid. A moment stop. My lord! my lord!
Spare him. I'll kneel to you, and wet the dust
With tears. Oh! husband, my dear husband! speak!
I,—Isidora—Isidora, whom
You loved so once, am here—here on my knees,
Before the world,—in the broad light. My lord!
Give him but time,—a word—(do you hear that?)
A word will clear him. Will you not listen? Oh!—
Cruel, oh! cruel! Mercy, yet;—oh, God!

[Isidora *falls before him.*

Piero. [*after a pause.*] Shall we not help the Duchess?

Curio. Stay, stay: he
Begins to move.

Piero. He looks like marble with those fixed eyes.

Curio. Ha! those are heavy tears.

Officer. Hark!

Duke. Mercy!—
No more of that. I am a desolate man:
Much injured; almost mad. I want—I'll have
Vengeance—tremendous vengeance. Ha! pale thing;
I will not tread upon her. Tears? what, tears?
Take her away.

Isidora *is taken out.*

My heart is cold as lead.
I should have had a cloak to cover me—
A tomb, a tomb, to keep the wind out. Ha!
I love this lonely pomp. My lamps are hung
All round a mighty dome; and music, like
The noises bursting from Æolian caves,
Come round me like a charm. Oh! I have been
Betrayed; ay, and revenged.—All silent? How!
Come, talk, Sirs, talk. [ISABELLA *enters.*

Officer. Will not your highness go?

Duke. Go? where? where? Ah! the light comes. I have been
Long wandering. Misery! oh, misery!
But justice shall be done; and vengeance. [*leans back.*

GHERALDI *and* PESARO *enter.*

Isab. Ha!

Gher. Madam, he has escaped.

Isab. Be still, Sir. Who?

Pes. Count Casti.

Isab. Ha! go seek him, and confine him:
Do this, and you shall thrive. This is unlucky.

Gher. 'Tis death.

Isab. Not quite so bad. Guido is gone
To rest.

Gher. How the Duke sits!

Isab. We'll lead him in. My lord!

Duke. Ah! Sister. Well; justice is done.

Casti. [*without.*] The Duke!

Duke. What voice is that?

[Casti *enters quickly.*

Casti. The Duke—where is the Duke?

Duke. Here,—on his seat of judgement.

Casti. Seize the Monk.

My lord, pray pardon me, but—O my heart!
Madam, you must not go.

Isab. Slave! dare you think
To daunt the sister of Mirandola?

Duke. What's this?

Casti. You are abused.

Duke. I know it. Wretch!
Will you bring back my terrors? Silence him.

Casti. You and your son are both abused,—betrayed.
You and your innocent wife. Look on the Monk.
Your son's as fair as Heaven. Mark the Monk,
I say. Here, my lord, here are letters,—scrawls
Fashioned in hell, too black for such a place.
Here are the letters which you sent to Naples.
Look! these your son writ; these—your sister sent.
I took them from the Monk: he bribed, and prayed,
Nay, wept and tore my cloak to get them, but
I have them here,—read, read!

Duke. Letters? my son!—

Casti. He met the Duchess here by my entreaty:
Against his wish he met her: nay——

Duke. Ah, sister! [*reads.*]

Casti. Read, Sir!

Isab. Slave! my son
Reigns in Mirandola. I am content.

Casti. Lead out the lady.

[ISABELLA *is taken out.*

Duke. Now, where is she?—gone!
'Tis better. Ah! thou cowled villain,—thou
Whom I have loved and trusted. I forget:
Where am I? I am wandering yet.

Casti. My lord!
Where is your son?

Duke. My son? Ha! death and haste.
Fly, fly and save him. Bring him hither. Drag
That villain to a dungeon. O, my heart!
Fly some one! fly again, and bring my son.
Oh! mercy, mercy!

Casti. Where is he—his son?

Officer. Led out to death.

Casti. Ha! where?

Officer. In the western court.

[CASTI *rushes out.*

Duke. My son! where is my son? Is no one gone
To stop my orders? Go—some more. I'll sit
Here, while the Heavens are trembling.

(A distant report of Musquetry is heard.)

Ha! [*Sinks down.*

(*After a short pause,* CASTI *re-enters.*)

Casti. My lord!

Duke. Ha! my good messenger, a word, a word;
But one: I'll give my Dukedom to you,—all.
Tell me he lives. Swear it. 'Tis my command.
Casti. Alas! it was too late. We can but pray.
Duke. Rain down your blights upon us!
Casti. Sir, be calm.
Duke. Sulphur and blistering fire. I want to die.
Unloose me here, here: I'm too tight.—Some one
Has tied my heart up; no, no; here, Sir, here.
All round my heart, and round my brain,—quick, quick—
I'm burning.—Hush! a drug—a—
Casti. Hold him up.
Duke. Some dull—some potent drink. I'll give—I'll give
The world away for peace. Oh! round my heart,
And—Ah! unloose this cord about my throat.
Has no one mercy here? I am the Duke,—
The Duke. Ha! I am—nothing.
Casti. Raise his head.
Now, my dear lord,—
Duke. O my poor son, my son!
Young victims—both so young,—so innocent.
But they are gone. I feel as I could sleep—
Sleep—hush! for ever. My poor son!—

[*Dies.*

THE END.

EPILOGUE

(BY A FRIEND.)

SPOKEN BY MISS FOOTE.

LADIES!—Excuse me that I live—but I
Implored the Poet not to let me die;
An author's fate, I urged, would do as well,—
To be alive, and but insensible.

No Epilogue is written, so you may guess
The Poet's and the Manager's distress:—
I've seen much mingled fury and despair,
Stamping of feet, and tearing of the hair,
Lines penn'd and blotted out,—old verses read
To see what earlier Epilogues have said:
But not a couplet could their favour win,—
The deepest Tragedy is there,—within.
I, by the Manager's entreaty press'd,
Come to implore your hearts for the distrest.
It is not very willingly I do't,
But Mr. Fawcett says, "They'll hear Miss Foote!"

And will you hear her?—You have thought perchance
She scarce *should* speak after so deep a trance;—
But women love last words—the best of all.
Faintness and speech are not unnatural,—

Meek Desdemona, as I've heard and read,
(True woman!) "spake, after long seeming *dead!*"
Then may not I throw off my death-like grief,
And talk a little,—merely for relief?

How like you this our play?—be candid—come—
Say, is the Tragic Muse at all at home?—
'Tis said large Theatres the Drama mar,—
At least some *little ones* keep up this war;
But oh! I love the wondrous scene,—the dress,—
The state, that lends to sorrow, mightiness.
Give me to see ennobled Tragedy
In proud magnificence go sweeping by—
Her royal beauty deepen'd—and her grace
Made awful by fit circumstance and place!
No niggard stage becomes her gorgeous gloom;
Her soul, as King John says, wants elbow room.

But I forget my duty to the play,
And custom disregard;—what shall I say?—
Let me recal to mind some sterling rhyme
Of an "approved good master" of his time—
"When Learning's triumphs o'er her barbarous foes
"First rear'd the stage"—a plague on't—I must close
This sombre task. I really cannot speak
The Epilogue—I'll learn one by next week.

In the meantime, kind friends, allow our play
To live without it till another day.

LONDON:

SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET-STREET.

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